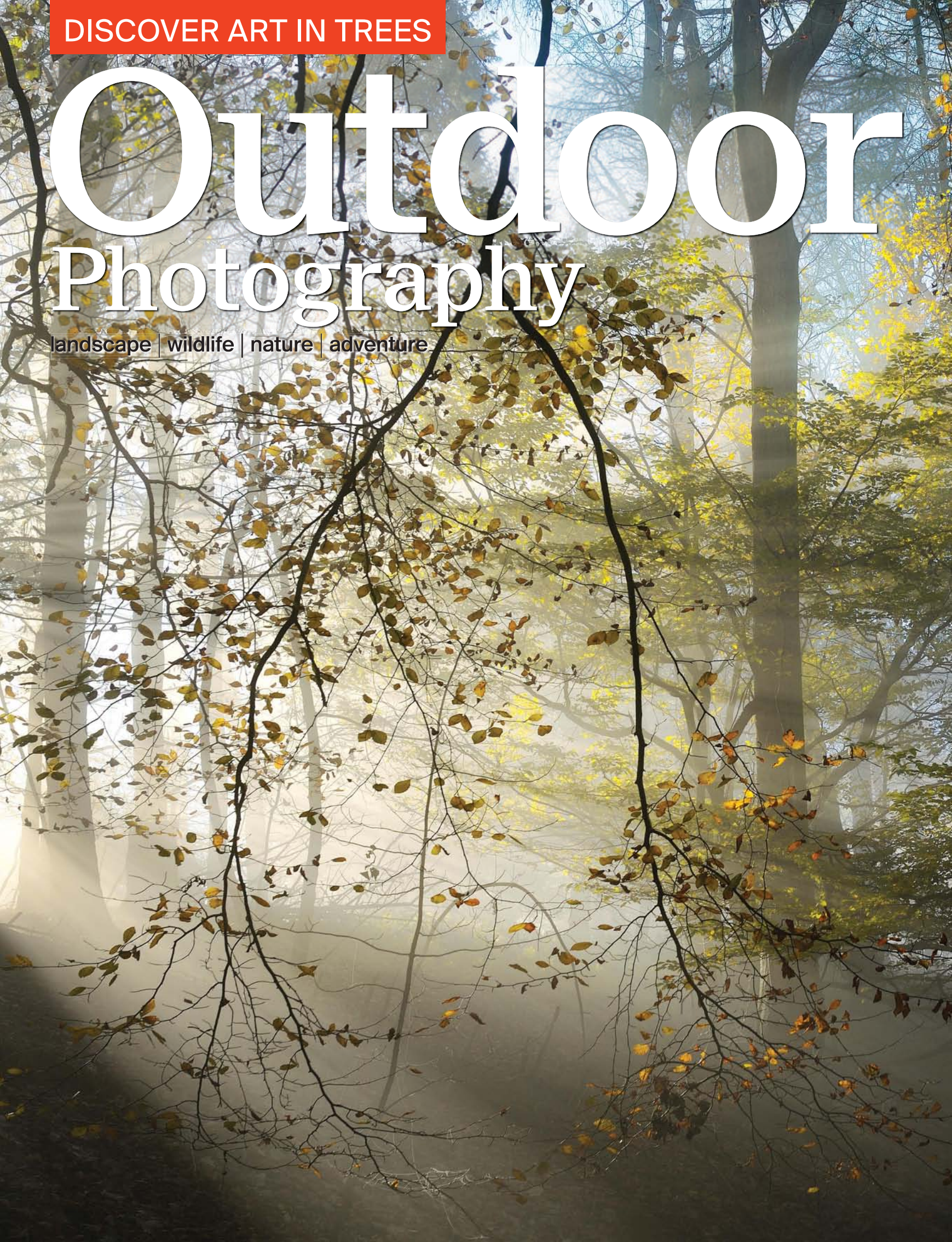


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landscape | wildlife | nature | adventure



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EDITOR'S LETTER

It's about being there

After spending a week in the Brecon Beacons with my wife Sarah and our two boys, Oliver ('grown up' at six) and Sam (zooming along at three), it hit me just how critical total immersion is in your preferred photography subject.

Watching the boys as they played around and in a swimming pool-sized tarn above the national park visitor centre for close to three hours (yes, fishing for moss with a stick and building a raft out of old bracken is that engaging!) reminded me of where my passion for the outdoors started. It was a long time before any thoughts developed about picking up a camera.

Growing up in a house with a garden with a large oak tree and backing on to fields and small, wooded hills was fortuitous, but I and all the children on our street didn't squander the opportunities the setting provided for exploring nature. Seemingly endless days and many spring and summer evenings were spent playing and having adventures at the very edges – and sometimes beyond – of the shouting ranges of our parents.

Oliver is already a keen photographer

(a 14-year head start on his dad), and although he took photos while we were in the Beacons, I can't help but think it was the hours he and Sam spent exploring the hills, caves and rivers that were more important in their creative development.

Acquiring knowledge of and nurturing an affinity with your subject are the things that will more readily help you identify fresh visions. Even if you are shooting a location or animal that is unfamiliar to you, it still pays to spend at least some time observing and getting a sense of things before getting the camera out to take photographs.

As Chris Weston explores in his series 'A photographer's guide to life on Earth' (*page 62*), the more we align ourselves and our minds with what lies before us, the more likely it is that we'll produce images with an unusual, possibly unique, edge to them. And that alignment starts the moment we take our first steps out into the 'wilds', and continues each subsequent time we're there.



Steve Watkins

GET IN TOUCH

EMAIL Contact the Editor, Steve Watkins, at steve@thegmcgroup.com or Deputy Editor, Claire Blow, at claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com

WRITE TO US Outdoor Photography, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1XN



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COVER IMAGE

Russ Barnes took this wonderful and evocative image of the early morning sun streaming through the trees and mist. Check out Russ' superb feature on finding artful photographs in woodland on *page 26*.

THE ISSUE at a glance



Wildlife photographer Bertie Gregory on what motivates him – *page 18*



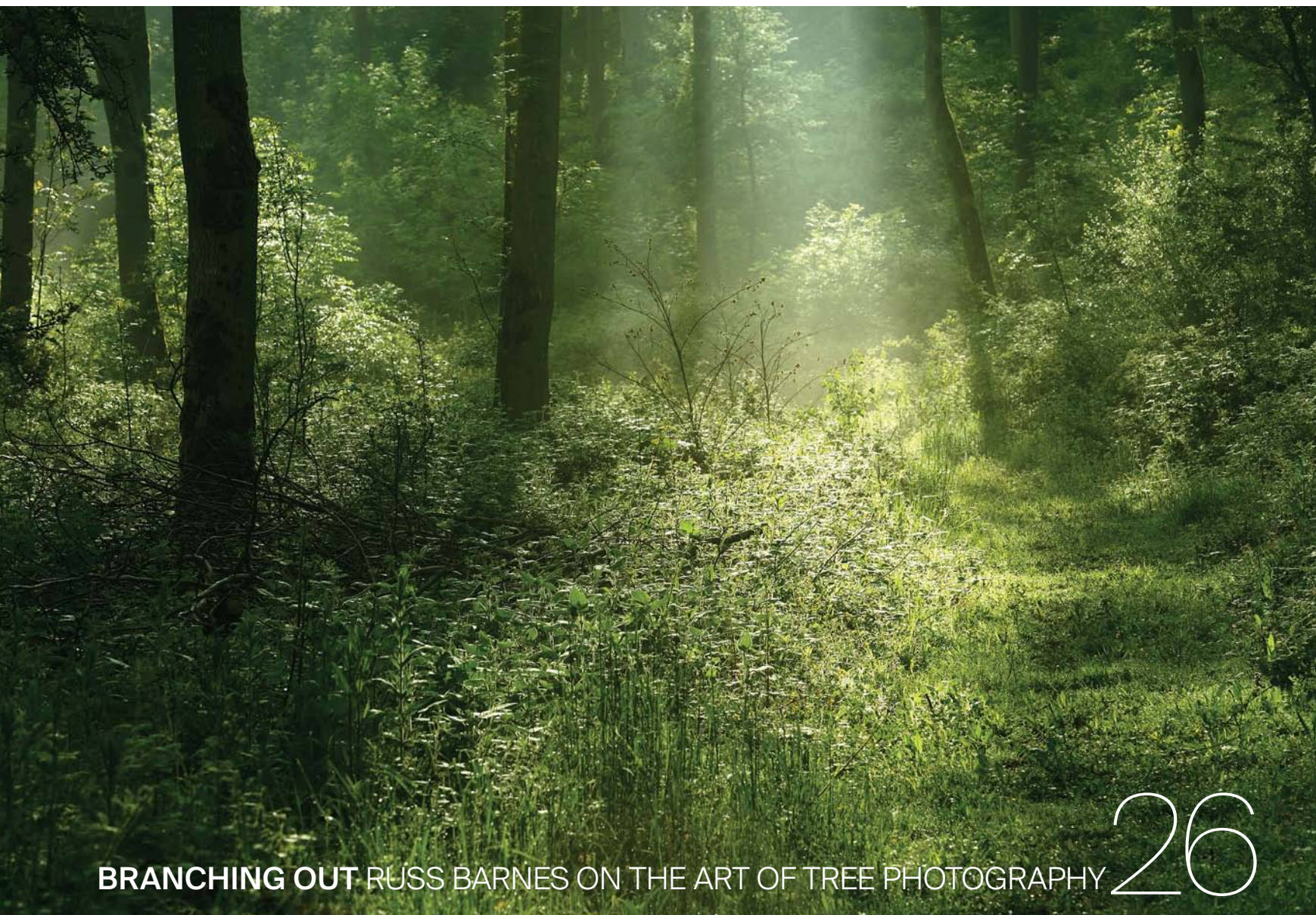
Russ Barnes reveals the secrets of soulful tree photography – *page 26*



Adventure sports photographer Nadir Khan is in the spotlight – *page 50*



Andy Luck puts the Samsung NX1 through its paces – *page 90*



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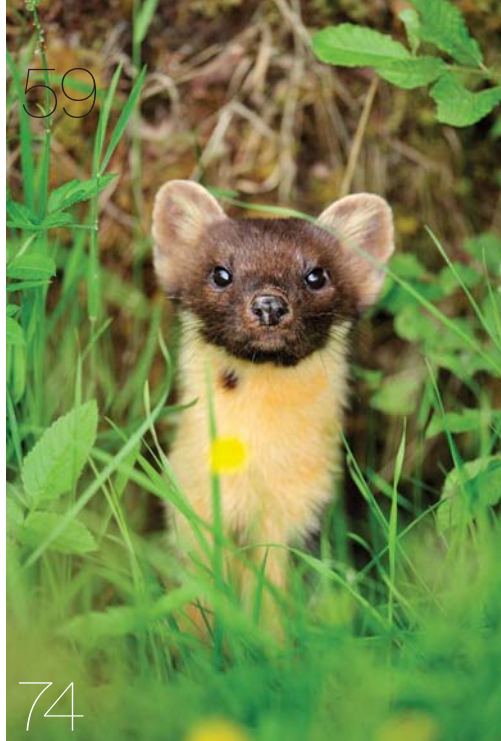
Eight top UK locations to shoot this month, including Cornwall's Marazion beach, Sgùrr nan



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- » David Ward on connecting with a subject
- » Camera test: Sony A7II

IN THE MAGAZINE THIS MONTH...



Sam Hobson is a Bristol-based wildlife photographer and photojournalist who specialises in urban wildlife. His inspiration comes from a desire to highlight conservation issues and to stand up for the quirky, unexpected and often overlooked wildlife that lives right under our noses.
samhobson.co.uk



Bertie Gregory is an up-and-coming wildlife photographer, filmmaker and presenter from Bristol. In 2012 he won the title of Young Outdoor Photographer of the Year 2012, and in 2014, after completing his zoology degree, he assisted Steve Winter on an assignment for *National Geographic*.
bertiegregory.com



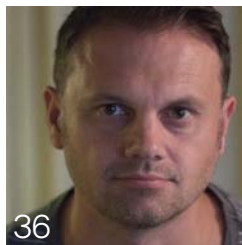
Pete Bridgwood is a fine art landscape photographer and writer. He is fascinated by the creative foundations of landscape photography and passionate about exploring the emotional elements of the art.
petebridgwood.com



Russ Barnes is an outdoor photographer based in the Midlands. He aims to capture the soul of the landscape and create images that are artistic and ethereal by using some less than conventional approaches.
russbarnes.co.uk



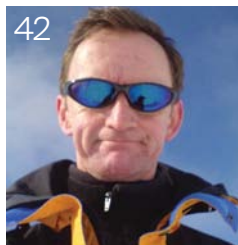
Over the last 20 years, **Lee Frost** has become one of the UK's leading landscape and travel photographers and one of the world's bestselling photography authors. He also leads sell-out photo workshops and tours.
leefrost.co.uk



Lee Acaster is a keen amateur based in East Anglia. Landscape photography is his passion, although in 2014 he was the overall winner of the British Wildlife Photography Awards, thanks to his one and only wildlife shot.
leecaster.com



Niall Benvie has photographed and written about the natural world and our relationship with it, professionally, for over 20 years. He is co-founder of the international photography project Meet Your Neighbours.
niallbenvie.com



Carlton Doudney is a landscape photographer based in Perthshire. As a kitchen-bound chef, he loves getting outside as much as he can. And as a keen mountain walker, the main focus for his photography is in high places, year round.



Keith Fergus has explored much of Scotland with his camera and has authored 11 books. He runs his own photographic business, which, under the banner of Scottish Horizons, produces a wide range of postcards, greetings cards and calendars.
scottishhorizons.co.uk



Chris Weston is a professional wildlife photojournalist. He has travelled widely to document the issues and challenges facing many of the world's rarest species, and is the principal photographer for the NGO Animals on the Edge.
chrisweston.photography



Naomi Stollow is devoted to making images that show how incredible nature is. She studied fine art, worked as a nursery teacher for 12 years and has spent the last 15 years working in e-commerce. Naomi travels with her camera whenever she can.
naomistollow.com



Nick Smith is a writer and photographer specialising in travel and environmental issues. He is a contributing editor on the *Explorers Journal* and is a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.
nicksmithphoto.com

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Lorraine Yates, **Andrew Ray** *andrewrayphotography.com*, **Lizzie Shepherd** *lizzieshepherd.com*, **Simon Whaley** *simonwhaley.co.uk*, **Graham Dunn** *grahamduinn.co.uk*, **Sean Lewis** *seanlewisphotography.co.uk*, **Paul Holloway** *paulhollowayphotography.co.uk*, **Laurie Campbell** *lauriecampbell.com*, **Steve Young** *birdsonfilm.com*, **Andy Luck** *wildopeneye.com*

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LEE Little Stopper & LEE 0.6 Soft Grad, Nikon D800E
Zeiss 21mm Distagon, 1 second @ F13



LEE Little Stopper, Nikon D800E
Zeiss 50mm Planar, 4 seconds @ F11



LEE Little Stopper & LEE 0.6 ND Soft Grad
Nikon D800E, Zeiss 21mm Distagon, 3 seconds @ F11



LEE Little Stopper, Nikon D800E
Nikon 70-200mm f2.8 @ 130mm, 3 seconds @ F11

LITTLE STOPPER

I regularly use long shutter speeds to create space and atmosphere in my work, often well over 5 minutes using a combination of low light conditions and filters. But sometimes the conditions may not be right for such long exposures, or indeed the subject might not require a such very long shutter speed, either because of adverse conditions: wind, rain or spray, or simply because I am trying to retain texture in the water I'm shooting.

On these occasions I use the LEE Little Stopper, so called not because of its size but because of its 6 stops of light reduction, compared to the 10 stops of the LEE Big Stopper. Like the Big Stopper, the Little Stopper works beautifully in conjunction with LEE ND graduated filters and is a must for those photographers, like myself, who like to 'get it right' in camera.

Jonathan Chritchley
www.jonathanchritchley.net

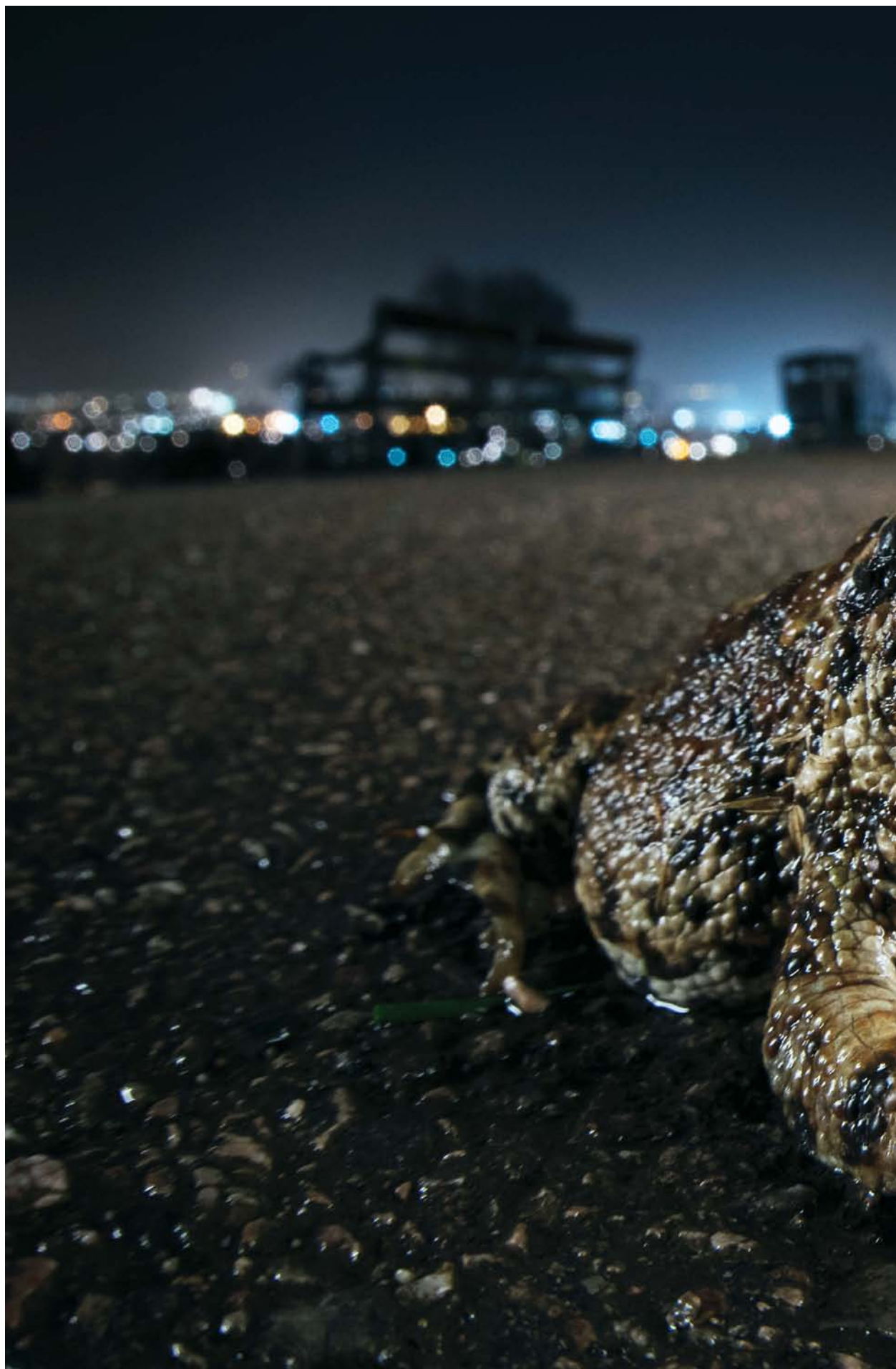


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Moonlight migration, Bristol

by Sam Hobson

For a few fleeting days each spring there is a mass moonlight migration in the centre of Bristol. Common toads wake from hibernation with a sudden urge to make for their ancestral breeding ponds – in this case in a city park at the summit of Bristol's tallest hill. Under the cover of darkness they make the formidable ascent, crossing roads and climbing almost any obstacle, as this annual expedition is their only opportunity to pass on their genes to the next generation. I used a super-wideangle, close-focusing lens to capture the character of this determined toad as it embarked on this epic and romantic adventure.





NEWSROOM

CONSERVATION

NEW LAUNCHES

COMPETITIONS

OUTDOORS

TECHNOLOGY

OTHER NEWS

Blackbird was the most widely spotted garden bird in this year's survey.



© Ray Kennedy/rspb-images.org.uk

Big Garden Birdwatch 2015 results revealed

Over half a million people took part in the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch at the end of January, and more than 8.5 million birds were spotted.

Sightings of every bird species featured in this year's top 20 most popular garden birds increased on the numbers recorded in 2014, apart from the three finches: chaffinch, goldfinch and greenfinch.

The average number of robins seen visiting gardens was at its highest since 2011, helping it climb three places to number seven, its joint highest-ever position in the Big Garden Birdwatch rankings. Blackbird, meanwhile, was spotted in over 90% of gardens, becoming the most widespread bird, and wren sightings doubled compared with 2014.

Two of the species that appear in this year's top 20 – house sparrow and starling – are red list species, meaning they are of 'highest conservation priority'. The RSPB says this highlights just how

valuable our gardens can be to visiting birds.

RSPB Conservation Scientist Dr Daniel Hayhow said: 'Many garden birds are in desperate need of our help. During winter, birds need extra food and water, a safe place to shelter and make their home. Gardens providing these things are invaluable for birds and are likely to have a significant effect on their numbers, perhaps even playing a pivotal role in reversing some declines.'

The survey results also showed a drop in finch numbers, but scientists aren't panicking yet. Daniel added: 'Despite the cold weather, birds such as goldfinch, greenfinch and chaffinch may not have been as reliant on food found in our gardens during winter because of a decent natural seed supply found in the wider countryside following a good summer.'

See all the results at rspb.org.uk/birdwatchbbc

Scottish Nature Photography Awards winner announced

Maltese photographer Johan Siggesson has been awarded the title of Scottish Nature Photographer of the Year for his image of an Atlantic puffin apparently bearing a floral gift. He captured the photograph, entitled 'I'm sorry...', during a trip to Scotland.

Johan said: 'When I came across this puffin on Fair Isle, I couldn't resist thinking that he must have some kind of hidden agenda. He looked so human with the flower in his bill. Exactly like he had been out doing something he wasn't proud of and was now on his way home to ask for forgiveness.'

Judges Lorne Gill, Niall Irvine, Neil McIntyre and Colin Prior picked the winner from over two thousand entries to the competition, which covers Scottish wildlife, landscape, botanical and abstract subjects. To find out more about the awards, and to enter this year's competition, please go to scottishnaturephotographyawards.com.



© Johan Siggesson



© Ollie Taylor

Durdle Door shot wins international competition

An image of the sun setting over Durdle Door on the Dorset coast has won the 2015 Velux Lovers of Light competition. Dorset-based landscape photographer Ollie Taylor, who captured the shot on a crisp winter's morning, wins a trip to northern Finland, worth £10,000.

Talking about his image, chosen from over 21,000 entries, Ollie said: 'I've been photographing Durdle Door for years in search of the perfect image; when I took this winter shot I'd worked out exactly where the sun would be positioned at that time of day, and used a lens which I knew produced excellent sunstars with the right settings and conditions. Finally I was able to achieve the image I had painted in my mind's eye.' velux.co.uk/loversoflight

Solihull park becomes hedgehog refuge



© Ern/Shutterstock.com

A project to create the UK's first dedicated hedgehog conservation zone is underway in Solihull. Warwickshire Wildlife Trust's 220-acre Hedgehog Improvement Area will incorporate its Elmdon nature reserve and Solihull Council's Elmdon Park.

Wildlife volunteers will manage the conservation area, which the wildlife trust hopes will become a central sanctuary, enabling hedgehogs to recolonise surrounding landscapes. The initiative also aims to inspire people and organisations to take action to help hedgehogs – one of the simplest ways is to make small holes (no bigger than the size of a CD) in your garden fences to enable them to move freely.

Once common in our countryside, hedgehogs have suffered dramatic declines in recent years due to loss of hedgerows and habitats. In 2011, research by Oxford University revealed that Britain's hedgehog population had dropped from about 30m in the 1950s to just 1.5m.

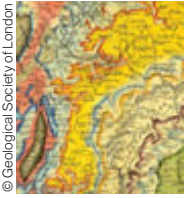
To find out more about how the Wildlife Trusts are helping the UK's hedgehogs, visit wildlifetrusts.org/hedgehogs.

Caption correction

In 'The big view' section of our April issue (OP190) we included an incorrect description for Syngenta Photography Award winner Mustafah Abdulaziz's image. To clarify, the photo, part of a series exploring global water scarcity issues, shows women of Tharpakar in the southern Sindh Province of Pakistan working together to pull water from a well. To view Abdulaziz's full set of images, visit syngentaphoto.com.

MAP IT OUT

From the rediscovery of a 200-year-old geological map to cutting-edge digital mapping technologies, here's a round-up of the latest map-related news stories...



© Geological Society of London

Seminal geology map rediscovered

A rare early copy of William Smith's 1815 Geological Map of England and Wales, previously thought lost, has been uncovered by Geological Society archivists. The map has been digitised and made available online in time for the map's 200th anniversary celebrations. The first geological map of a nation ever produced, the map became the basis for all future geological maps of Britain, and influenced geological surveys around the world.

Images of the map can be viewed at geolsoc.org.uk/PictureLibrary. For details of events celebrating William Smith's map bicentennial, visit williamsmith2015.org.

Upgraded version of ViewRanger launches

ViewRanger has released an upgraded version of its outdoors navigation smartphone app. Promising a more user-friendly interface and a greater emphasis on helping users to discover new routes across the world, ViewRanger 6 is available now for both iOS and Android devices. Find out more at viewranger.com/en-gb.

OS releases new mapping products

Ordnance Survey has released four new digital mapping products: OS Open Map Local is the most detailed street-level map available, bringing together rural and urban features and buildings as well as data such as population and crime statistics; Open Names is a search tool that collates more than 2.5 million UK locations; OS Open Rivers shows the flow and location of waterways across the country; and Open Roads is a road network that pinpoints information such as accident hotspots.

There are now 16 Open Data products, which are free to view, download and use. Visit os.uk/opendata.

Mount Everest virtually mapped



Nepal's Everest region has been added to Google Street View. Local mountaineer Apa Sherpa spent 10 days leading the Google Maps team. Travelling by foot, they navigated the stone-strewn trails of the Khumbu valleys, in the shadow of Mount Everest, to capture more than 45,000 panoramic images. Take a tour at google.co.uk/maps.

New bee-mapping technology trialled

Ecologists at Kew Gardens in London are trialling tiny trackers that can be glued to bees to monitor their behaviour. Measuring less than 8x5mm, and with a reach of 1.2m, the microchip devices emit a unique signal that can be picked up and logged by detector units. It is hoped the new technology will allow scientists to track bees in the wild, helping to give new insights into the threats facing bee populations and the important pollination services they provide. Find out more at kew.org.

OUT THERE

IN PRINT

Svalbard Exposed

Ole Jørgen Liodden
and Roy Mangersnes

» *WildPhoto Travel*

» 978-8-2999-9100-1

» Hardback, \$59

» Available for UK residents
via wildphoto.com

Ole Jørgen Liodden and Roy Mangersnes are two of the world's most highly regarded Arctic photographers, so when they team up to create a book about the region's landscapes and wildlife, you can be

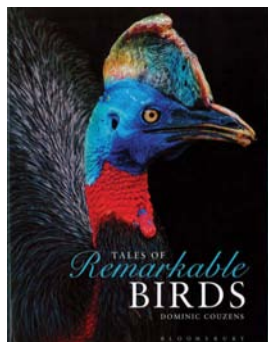


© Roy Mangersnes/naturepl.com

sure the results will be breathtaking. Here they share their photographic encounters from the last decade or so on Svalbard, a Norwegian archipelago, and one of the most northerly settlements on Earth. Large in format, and mostly in colour, the photographs show the extremes of this dramatic yet

fragile environment. Epic icescapes are set alongside powerful wildlife images. Photographs of polar bears, walruses, foxes, nesting birds and blue whales serve as a powerful reminder that this spectacular part of the world is a true wilderness – and one that needs to be protected.

above Little auk (*Alle alle*) group on rocks near their breeding colony, outside Longyearbyen, Svalbard.



Tales of Remarkable Birds

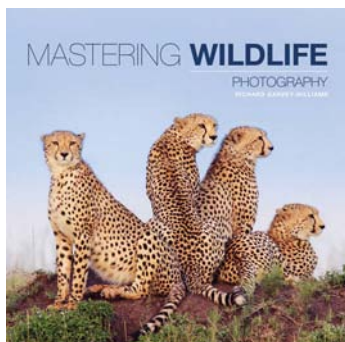
Dominic Couzens

» *Bloomsbury*

» 978-1-4081-9023-4

» Hardback, £20

A fascinating read from start to finish, *Tales of Remarkable Birds* will appeal to anyone curious about the extraordinary behaviour of the planet's birds. A leading wildlife author of more than 30 books,



Dominic Couzens has a talent for entertaining yet educational writing to keep you amused and informed in equal measure. Selecting species he's studied in the wild – from south-eastern Australia's white-winged choughs to the Falkland Islands' rockhopper penguins – Couzens divides the book by continent, with each section featuring five to six astonishing examples of unusual bird behaviour. With 120 stunning images by recognised wildlife photographers (including David Tipling, Frans Lanting and David Hosking) to illustrate the lively text, this book will be of interest both to avid birders and those wanting to learn more about the natural world.

Mastering Wildlife Photography

Richard Garvey Williams

» *Ammonite Press*

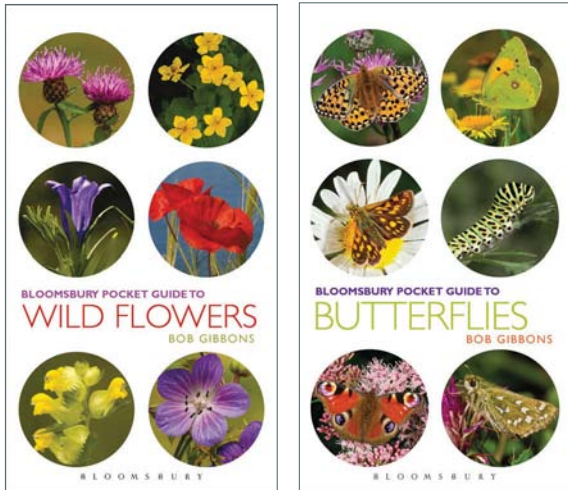
» 978-1-9077-0857-2

» Paperback, £19.99

It might well be his exposure to animals as a child in East Africa that has helped make Richard Garvey Williams such an accomplished wildlife photographer. He is also a natural in teaching others how to improve their photographic skills, and in this concise and comprehensive guide he shares what he's learnt over the years.

With advice to help you improve both your technical and artistic skills, this 176-page book has something for any budding nature photographer. Topics range from how to frame group and individual wildlife portraits, to how to make the most of your hides and blinds. Illustrated with Garvey Williams' stunning and diverse pictures for readers to aspire to, this book is a valuable introduction to the challenging but rewarding craft of wildlife photography.

POCKET NATURE GUIDES



The warmer seasons are now upon us, and it is the ideal time to get out there and enjoy the natural world. Here are two pocket guides we think are great resources for discovering and learning about your surroundings.

Bloomsbury Pocket Guide to Wild Flowers

Bob Gibbons

» Bloomsbury

» 978-1-4729-1328-9

» Paperback, £10

With spring in full flow, now is the optimum time to photograph our colourful and varied flora. With descriptions of 130 different UK wildflowers, this handy guide will help you identify some of the most attractive, and conspicuous, flowering plants found in Britain. Focusing on the more common flowers growing across the UK, the book is useful if planning a shoot, as it includes flowering times and where different species can be found. Interesting facts about the flowers are also included.



© Bob Gibbons

Bloomsbury Pocket Guide to Butterflies

Bob Gibbons

» Bloomsbury

» 978-1-4729-1592-4

» Paperback, £10

Beautiful yet challenging to photograph, butterflies can be a common sight in the UK during spring and summer, but it can be surprisingly difficult to track down specific species.

In this beautifully illustrated guide, nature expert and photographer Bob Gibbons details 70 different types of butterflies, and reveals where and when you can expect to see them. Other useful features include a list of UK nature reserves in which particular butterflies thrive, and useful techniques for spotting them.



© Bob Gibbons

Also in Bloomsbury's Pocket Guide series: *Insects, Garden Birds, Mushrooms, Trees and Shrubs and Tracks and Signs.*

GARDEN PHOTO BOOKS

There's been a surge of interest in photographing nature close to home, fuelled by competitions such as International Garden Photographer of the Year. Constantly changing throughout the seasons, and home to an array of plants and wildlife, gardens offer a wealth of photographic potential. Here we've picked out three very different garden-themed photo books to inspire you.



Ireland Glenkeen Garden

Edited by Michel Satke

» Hirmer Publishers

» 978-3-7774-2308-1

» Nine books in

presentation box, £315

Reminding us how

subjective a medium

photography can be,

Ireland Glenkeen

Garden consists of nine individual books, with images by five different photographers, that all depict one garden on the southernmost tip of Ireland. The 600 pictures – by Ulrike Crespo, Oliver Jiszda, W Michael Satke, Kurt-Michael Westermann and Gerald Zugmann – take us to a place rich with flowers, winding paths, ponds, streams, bridges and meadows. With each volume featuring a different layout, this is an ambitious project of varying viewpoints of one subject.



Photo (left) Ulrike Crespo (right) Oliver Jiszda © W Michael Satke



The Gardener

Jan Brykczynski

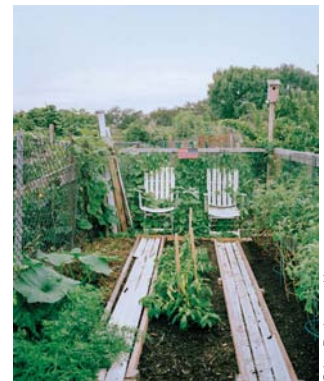
» Dewi Lewis Publishing

» 978-1-9078-9366-7

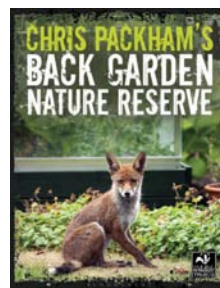
» Hardback, £25

For his most recent project, Jan Brykczynski travelled around the world to explore how city dwellers connect with nature. Focusing

on low-income communities and how they have created green spaces within their areas, Brykczynski's photographs work on many levels. Showing group collaboration, people's ingenuity and how nature and urban development can combine, this project is as insightful as it is inspiring.



© Jan Brykczynski



Chris Packham's Back Garden Nature Reserve

Chris Packham

» Bloomsbury

» 978-1-4729-1602-0

» Paperback, £16.99

Focusing on the best ways to attract wildlife to your garden (be it a

large plot or an urban window box), photographer and TV presenter Chris Packham's new book is an entertaining read for those interested in plants and animals. The book is divided into six sections, including one devoted to photography, in which Packham explains how to build a garden studio.



© David Cotteridge/Chris Packham

THE BIG VIEW

EXHIBITIONS

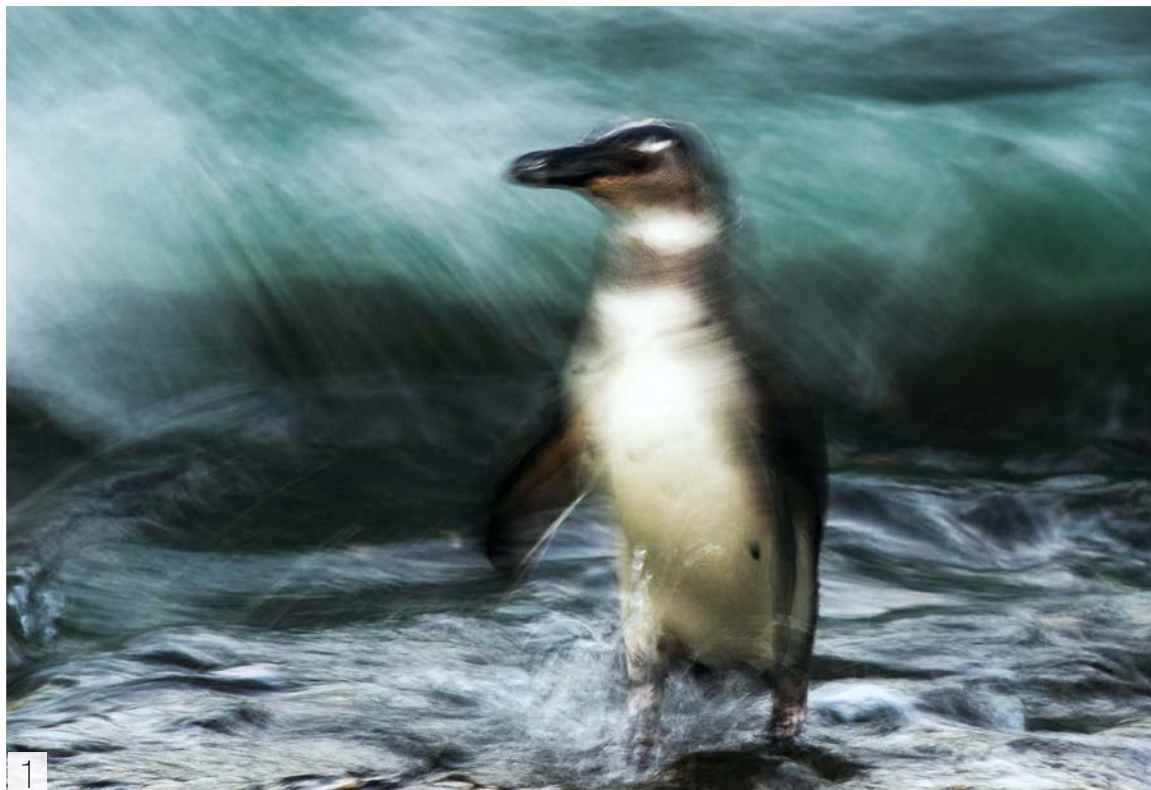
1 Fragile

» Grant Bradley

Gallery, Bristol

» 9 to 30 May

Images by some of the world's leading wildlife photographers will be on show at a free, conservation focused exhibition this spring in Bristol. The show is part of charity Wildscreen's celebrations for the launch of Wildscreen Exchange – an online library with free and affordable digital media that can be used by conservation organisations. Believing emotive and stunning imagery can raise the public's environmental awareness, Wildscreen hopes its latest initiative will enable charities and organisations to create the most impactful campaigning, in order to raise awareness of the fragility of our natural world. The exhibition will showcase a selection of imagery that has been donated by leading photographers, including Peter Chadwick, founder of African Conservation Photography, underwater photographer Christian Vizl and British wildlife photographer Luke Massey (see OP187's photography showcase 'Living alongside leopards'). wildscreen.org.uk



© Peter Chadwick

2 View of the West

» Gallery at Glengorm

Castle, Isle of Mull

» 1 to 31 May

An exhibition of Hebridean images by landscape photographer Sam Jones. Locations include Lewis, Harris, Barra, Skye and Staffa. Normally preferring to photograph in stormy and unpredictable conditions, Jones has also included some

quieter, more contemplative images. One of the featured photographs, 'Caravan, Isle of Lewis', was shortlisted in 2013's Scottish Nature Photography Awards.

islandscap photography.co.uk

3 Anglia

» Eleven Gallery, London

» 14 May to 18 July

Using a 10x8 Gandolfi plate camera and high quality

printing, Harry Cory Wright's photographs depict the eastern lowlands of Britain with incredible clarity.

Exploring old and new elements in the landscape, and where they meet, the images appear suspended somewhere in-between, evoking an eerie quality. Not afraid to include large areas of emptiness in his compositions, Cory Wright is creating



© Sam Jones



© Harry Cory Wright

something new within the landscape genre. Eleven will also be exhibiting Cory Wright's works at Photo London, which takes place at Somerset House between 21 and 24 May. elevenfineart.com

4 Living a Wildlife

» Joe Cornish Gallery, Northallerton, North Yorkshire
» 1 to 30 May

Coinciding with Joe Cornish's exhibition, New Work (see OP191), a selection of Chris Martin's images are on show at the Joe Cornish Gallery throughout May. Often working in black & white, Martin focuses on Africa's breathtaking wildlife and landscapes.

joeconishgallery.co.uk



© Chris Martin

KESWICK MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL 2015 THE HIGHLIGHTS

Inspiring people to experience, explore and enjoy the great outdoors, the Keswick Mountain Festival (KMF) is a must-visit annual event. Taking place in the stunning Cumbrian landscape, the four-day festival is packed full of things for people of all ages to see and do. Here are some highlights from this year's festival that we think will encourage you to get out your hiking boots, mountain bikes and paddles and join in the fun.



» With more than 30 different guided walks to choose from, KMF's hike programme has a variety of routes to enjoy, from gentle strolls to challenging treks. For experienced walkers, we recommend **Helvellyn by Sunrise**, where you'll set off with a professional guide at midnight and reach the summit of Helvellyn at sunrise.

» KMF has an impressive speaker lineup this year: names include bushcraft expert and TV presenter Ray Mears, rock climber Leo Holding and Olympic gold medal-winning triathlete Alistair Brownlee. Don't miss climber **Andy Kirkpatrick's A Tale of Adventure to Antarctica** at the Theatre by the Lake on the Thursday evening. Andy will recount his 50-day trip to reach the top of the 2930m Ulvetanna Peak.

» The festival has lots of events to keep both you and the kids entertained. Take the **half-day Canoeing River Trip with Keswick**

Canoe & Bushcraft, for example, where the whole family can enjoy a four-hour trip down the Middle Derwent. With gentle rapids and open views of Cavsey Pike and Grisedale Pike to enjoy, there's also the chance of spotting nesting ospreys and other wildlife en route.

» **Navigation classes** will take place each day at the festival – from introductory to advanced courses. With professionals to guide you, you'll learn how to plan and follow a route across featureless terrain, navigate in poor visibility and re-orientate yourself if you get lost when out in the field.

» A great way to see the stunning Lake District scenery is by bike, so we recommend taking part in the **Sky Ride Stations and Tunnels**. A free, six-mile cycle along Keswick's disused railway line, this easygoing event is suitable for all ages. For more serious cyclists, the off-road **Guided MTB Ride** leads into the heart of the Lakeland mountains, via the remote Lonscale Fell and Gledereterra Terrace.

Keswick Mountain Festival

» Crow Park, Cumbria
» 14 to 17 May

If you want to have the full festival experience, you can stay at KMF's dedicated camping site, which is a 10-minute walk from the Festival Village. For more details, plus information about ticket prices and how to book, head to keswickmountainfestival.co.uk.



WOODLAND EVENTS TO INSPIRE

Taking our cue from June's technique feature on how to capture the spirit of trees in your photos, here are a few woodland events to inspire you...

Wild Food Foray

» Sherwood Pines, Nottinghamshire
» 16 May

Learn how to identify edible and medicinal plants with mycologist Patrick Harding as he takes you on a four-and-a-half hour walk through the Forestry Commission's Sherwood Pines Forest Park. forestry.gov.uk/forestry/INFD-9QMKF6

A Walk with Four-Legged Architects

» New Forest, Hampshire
» 3 June

One of the UK's most recognised native pony breeds, the New Forest pony is vital to the sustainability of the area it lives in. Find out more during this four-and-a-half-hour walk with a Forestry Commission volunteer ranger. forestry.gov.uk/forestry/BEEH-9U2K43

The Bushcraft Show

» Beehive Farm, Derbyshire
» 23 to 25 May

This year's Bushcraft Show is packed full of activities and events to prepare you for any adventure. Along with opportunities to learn skills such as tracking, firelighting and foraging, there's a range of talks from bushcraft, fieldcraft and survival experts. thebushcraftshow.co.uk

A Walk in Ashdown Forest

» Ashdown Forest, East Sussex
» 6 June

Sussex Wildlife Trust's guided walk explores the landscapes of Ashdown Forest in the High Weald, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In the morning you'll walk three miles to the south of Fairwarp, passing through Sussex Wildlife Trust's Brickfield Meadow; in the afternoon there's a two-mile walk to the north of Fairwarp. sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/events



© Alex Brunsdon

PLAN AHEAD!

Festival of Nature, Bristol

» 13 to 14 June

The UK's biggest free natural history event, the Bristol Festival of Nature, gives the whole family the opportunity to explore and enjoy the wonders of the natural world. With interactive exhibits and activities from the BBC Natural History Unit, National Trust, RSPB and Avon Wildlife Trust, the weekend event will inspire and inform all who visit. Please check the website for the full programme of events. bnhc.org.uk

Your letters

Write to us! We love getting your views and responses; email claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com

LETTER
OF THE
MONTH

Setting the wheels in motion

I have just read Steve Watkins' editor's letter in the April issue ('Living the dream', OP190), and I can truly say that 2015 is already my dream year.

Disability has kept me homebound most of the time for the last few years, but I've now been fitted with a wheelchair. Scotland, where I live, has a network of paved cycle paths, covering both coastal and cross-country routes, and they are ideal for wheelchairs. So, together with my Nikon cameras (F3HP and my new D800e), I will be making as much use of these routes as possible.

So, Steve is correct in saying that we don't all need to open a gallery to fulfil our dreams; just having a new set of wheels has set my own dreams in motion.

John Campbell, via email



above Nigel Sawyer's photograph of the offending drone.

Remote controversy

There seems to be a debate building up around the use of drones for aerial photography, so to put in my two pennyworth, I believe that they should be banned from areas where they either pose a risk to other people or known wildlife sites.

On Easter Sunday I was on the cliff top at Seaford Head taking shots of kittiwakes, when a persistent whining sound had me turning round looking for the source of the noise – fortunately for me I was a metre or so from the cliff edge. The whining got louder, and the source of the noise turned out to be a drone, which was buzzing around just a few metres above my head.

The noise could have disturbed the birds and it could have been really

dangerous if the 'pilot' (wherever and whoever they were) had flown the drone much closer to my head. Such a contraption could surprise someone standing closer to the cliff edge – and it is a long drop to the beach. Although the drone may have been in the operator's line of sight, I could not see them, and they did not even have the courtesy to attempt to come over to inform me of what they were doing.

In my opinion, users of drones need to be aware of the effect they might have on others. Operating one should require a license, details of which should be clearly marked on the drone, and it should only be possible to use them in designated areas.

Nigel Sawyer, Kingston upon Thames

All about the image

I was browsing through *Magnum Landscapes* the other day and noticed that, unlike most contemporary photographic books, there are no technical details accompanying the images. No mention of camera model, f-stop, shutter speed, film ISO or the name of the tripod used, if indeed one was used. The image is what this book is all about.

It's quite likely that if you had asked Henri Cartier-Bresson, Elliott Erwitt

or Bruce Davidson what camera settings were used for a specific photograph, you would most likely get a Gallic shrug or an expletive. In 'those days' there was no EXIF file recording the minutest detail of each shot. And, unless you committed the image details to a written log, they would soon be forgotten.

I nearly wrote 'how lucky we are today' in having all that data at our fingertips. But then I thought that perhaps we are not. Are we losing the point, in a fog of technicalities, that a great photographic image is formed not by having the most technical and expensive equipment, but rather by having developed a keen eye for a memorable image that conveys something of the moment to the viewer?

Tony Gomm, Chandlers Ford

Power to the people

As a long-standing subscriber to *Outdoor Photography*, I see the Lake District featured in the magazine on a regular basis, as a place of beauty and inspiration for landscape photographers. For this reason, I hope that readers of *OP* will share my concern regarding the imminent decision by National Grid to build high-voltage national infrastructure-scale pylons around the coast to carry electricity from the power station being built at Sellafield. The planned route goes through treasured locations such as the Whicham Valley and Duddon Sands.

A campaign group is trying to persuade National Grid to select their alternative option of subsea cable. Please support us by visiting the 'Power without Pylons' website (powerwithoutpylons.org.uk) to sign our petition.

Philip Hulme, via email



June's letter of the month winner, John Campbell, receives a MindShift Gear UltraLight Camera Cover, worth £27.50

Providing simple protection and allowing you to freely access your camera while hiking, MindShift Gear's UltraLight Camera Cover is the first camera cover of its kind. Lightly padded to shield your camera from debris and scratches, it has an integrated belt to keep your DSLR close to hand. It comes in three sizes to fit a small DSLR, a standard or gripped DSLR or a standard or gripped DSLR with large zoom lens attached.

Available in the UK from snapperstuff.com

Finding your way

I have been reading *Outdoor Photography* for more than five years and enjoy many of the features. I am a bit of a magpie and retain past issues for reference. Over the years I have remembered the content of articles but have found it very difficult to locate them.

You could make life easier by producing an annual keyword index to the year's content. This would seriously help in finding previous articles and would be useful when planning projects or trips.

Brian Dodson, *Kilmarnock*

Ed's comment *Thank you for your suggestion, Brian. We are always looking for ways of making content more accessible to readers and will explore how we can incorporate your idea as we move forward with the magazine. In the meantime, we would love to hear from anyone else who has any thoughts on the matter.*

Reality check

I am writing in response to Thomas Latcham's letter ('Minimal tweaks', OP191), which I read to be a complaint about the amount of post-production that takes place these days. He states that we should 'remember the original art of taking an image, which is to create using a camera and light.'

Surely a camera and light has only ever produced a latent image. It is only the post-production that brings that image out. This can be developing and printing if using film (with all the techniques used to bring out what the photographer visualised rather than what was actually in front of the camera), or digitally, using Lightroom, Photoshop or whatever.

If the final image has merit, why does it matter how it was produced?

Brian Baker, *via email*

Lost in the moment

April's viewpoint, Mynydd Bychan in Powys (OP190), proved very timely, as it was a convenient location to visit during a three-day photo break in Wales, with a friend and fellow photographer.

The Dragons Back pub was easy to find, an hour's drive from our base in Newport. Parking was straightforward and the paths clearly signposted. Yellowhammers, robins and blue tits serenaded us from the surrounding bushes and trees. Rabbits scattered. A buzzard took to the sky, wary of our approach.

The final climb was a good test of the lungs and the calves. A light but lazy wind tried to go through us rather than

around us, but the 360° views from near Mynydd Bychan made our efforts worthwhile. It was an image-rich environment, enhanced by the sweeping weather fronts, giving constantly changing views in all directions.

The clouds rolled across the sky, allowing the sun to periodically burst through and paint the farmland with a golden yellow sunbeam before being covered again. The scenery was a delight viewed through, and over the viewfinder.

For me, the pleasure of outdoor photography is being lost in a moment, completely absorbed in the scenery, losing all track of time and simply concentrating on creating imagery. Everything else is forgotten. Apart from the fact Wales were due to kick off in the rugby at 12.30pm.

With an hour's trip back to base, our photography was over for the day. Mynydd Bychan made a lasting impression and we will return because it has much to offer, whatever the weather.

During the course of the weekend we visited the west coast of Wales and even went to the Photography Show at the Birmingham NEC. A great weekend for photography, but not so good for the rugby.

Nic Davies, *via email*

below One of Nic Davies' shots from his trip to Mynydd Bychan, Powys.



Canon or Nikon?

I would like to offer my response to Matt Smith's letter in OP190, 'Canon versus Nikon'.

To answer Matt's question on whether the 24mm PC-E lens is any good on the Nikon, I can say from my experience that yes, it is. I have used it on a D800 and now my D810, and the images are astonishingly good when you get your technique right. I always used to struggle to get the quality and depth of focus using 'normal' lenses, and for landscape I now only use the tilt-shift 24mm. I have also just bought the 45mm lens. It takes time and practice to get right, and it can be frustrating when you are chasing the focus around on the live view screen, but it is worth it. I don't know what Matt means by 'downright terrible' focusing – on mine it is pin-sharp, and on the new D810, when you zoom in to 100%, you can see sharp detail in the farthest distance that is impossible to see with the naked eye, and it extends all the way to the front foot of my tripod.

OK, I will admit there is a softening at the extreme edges and corners when using this lens, but I have no problem with that. I also understand the Canon version has the tilt-shift controls available to use together. You can have your Nikon modified to do the same if you wish, but I have had no need to do so.

Graham Fennell, *via email*

I have used the Nikon 24mm PC-E lens for some time and I regard it as my best lens by a mile. I also have the 85mm PC lens (older version) and I think it equally good. Both are very sharp and deliver excellent colour. I can certainly recommend them. On the other hand, I have no experience with Canon kit, so cannot comment on that.

Nikon has a 24mm, a 45mm and a 85mm PC lens, and they are actually easy to use if you have used medium format. I think part of the problem is that they are manual focus, and a lot of people are not used to that. I started photography during the film era, when all lenses were manual focus – I think that gives me a slight advantage when using Nikon's PC lenses.

Frank Fitzpatrick, *via email*



IN CONVERSATION WITH Bertie Gregory

Twenty-one-year-old British wildlife photographer Bertie Gregory has in his short career to date become one of the nation's leading exponents of the art. Here, he explains what motivates him to get out in the wild in search of animals...

above Young red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) on frosty grass in an urban park in Bristol.

‘Whenever I’m photographing wildlife, I always try to tell the story of the animals by setting them in their environment,’ says Bertie Gregory. The up-and-coming Dorset-based photographer says that to do this he tries ‘to get really close to the subject and use a wideangle lens so that I can get the spirit of the animal in the foreground, but also something of the surroundings in the background.’

Gregory goes on to explain that the reason he is attracted to this style of narration is because he sees so frequently in wildlife photography what he calls ‘animal ID shots’, where the animal itself is photographed almost studio-style with a shallow depth of field, where the context is blown out. ‘You get a beautiful bird, maybe singing on a branch, and that’s it. That

can be interesting, but I don’t think it helps the species in any way, beyond the fact that people are able to identify the bird and say “there it is...”

Gregory divides his photography into two main areas that he describes as his passions. First, there is the urban context: ‘by following iconic city species, such as foxes, I am trying to convince people that they can have a genuine wildlife experience close to home that is just as wild as anywhere else.’ He says it is important to nurture metropolitan wild spaces, exploring the false disconnection between the assumptions that the city is where we live and that somehow wildlife is elsewhere, ‘somewhere you go to, rather than a place you’re part of.’

At the opposite end of the spectrum, his complementary passion is wildlife ‘found in genuine wilderness areas, pristine



eco-systems.' It is this discipline in which he feels that he has chiselled out a niche, hoping to spend 'extended periods in these places, on next to no budget. That's how I sum up my work.'

Gregory is happy enough with the label 'British wildlife photographer', and it is one that seems to sit comfortably and naturally on the shoulders of a man still in his 21st year. It's no exaggeration to say that he has got off to a flying start. Quite apart from scooping the 2012 Young Outdoor Photographer of the Year accolade, he's already rubbing shoulders with some of the biggest names in the business. Last July he graduated from the University of Bristol with a first class degree in zoology, and while his contemporaries were pondering what to do next, the following day he boarded a plane to begin assisting Steve Winter on assignment for *National Geographic*. So has any of this started to sink in yet?

'One thing that I have started to realise is that everything is interconnected, and when I look back at my journey over the past few years, I find it amazing how it has all suddenly kicked off. I constantly feel out of my depth.' The way he copes with this sensation is to emulate another urban wildlife species: as with the swan, he maintains a calm exterior topside, while 'underneath I'm kicking harder than anyone.'

Of the many professional attributes that define Gregory's photography, the most outstanding is simply how well executed his compositions are. And while it is tempting to keep qualifying any analysis of the portfolio with the 'for his age' condescension, his work is outstanding by any measure. Photographers in his position tend to have inherited at least

part of their skillset from photographic influences such as keenly artistic parents, teachers or other mentors. But Gregory has got to where he is today largely by the fruit of his own labours.

'My dad is interested in photography casually, and used to take his small DSLR on holiday with us and take pictures' – a responsibility that has now been palmed off on to the son. 'So you could say that I've always been exposed – sorry that's a terrible pun – to photography in general.' But the impulse really came from his Dorset upbringing, where he would walk his dog in fields, where roe deer, buzzards, red kites and other iconic British species were plentiful. Realising quickly that dogs and wildlife photography don't mix well, the canine was relegated to the back seat and the camera started to take centre stage.

'This was when I fell in love with getting close to animals and becoming part of the landscape.' This idea of getting close naturally split his approach in two. For urban species such as squirrels and foxes that are habituated to humans, it was simply a case of getting up close and personal, but for genuinely wild mega fauna such as bears Gregory quickly learned the virtues of remote camera operation. 'It's extremely dangerous to try to get near to these animals. But it's also irresponsible, because if the animal were to hurt you then it's not the animal's fault. But the attitude is that if a predator attacks then it will be destroyed, which makes it pretty selfish trying to get too close. One of the ways to solve this problem is to get away from the camera.'

Remote photography comes with its own challenges and in some ways resembles fishing, where you set your gear up and

above A red deer (*Cervus elaphus*) hind and her calf in Richmond Park, London.

>







My aim in the next five years is to have shot a feature for National Geographic and presented a wildlife documentary for the BBC... it's good to be ambitious

previous spread
Great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) feeding its recently hatched chicks in De Biesbosch National Park, Netherlands.

above An alpha female coastal grey wolf (*Canis lupus*), yawns as she relaxes on the mudflats of her territory at low tide, Vancouver Island, Canada.

opposite top Male Andean cock-of-the-rock (*Rupicola peruvianus*) in Manu forest, Peru.

opposite bottom
Leaf cutter ant in south-east Peru.

wait. So how much of a new way of thinking did this present to the photographer. 'It depends. The remote photography I've done up until now has all been done within sight of the animal and camera, with the shutter controller in my hand. But now I've started assisting Steve Winter for *National Geographic*, all his remote photography is in camera-trap mode, where you might leave the camera out in the field for six months. If you're the guy pressing the button... well, you can't do that.'

Having achieved so much in such a short space of time and at such an early point in his career, Gregory is in the enviable position of knowing what he wants to do with his life at a time when others frequently don't. 'I have always known that I want to be a wildlife photographer. The reason for that is that I'm interested in both wildlife and photography. And so I use the combination of the two basically as an excuse to spend a lot of time outside getting close to really cool animals.'

The zoology degree at first sight would appear to be central to this career trajectory. But while Gregory admits that it was great fun and that he enjoyed the support mechanisms he was able to take advantage of while reading for his degree, 'the actual stuff that I learned on the course isn't all that relevant to what I'm doing today. If I go out to shoot a white-tailed sea eagle, nothing on my degree course is going to help me to do that in any way.'

More important than the content of his course was the fact that he was studying in Bristol, a city that Gregory describes as the home of the British wildlife filmmaking industry. 'On the way to lectures I'd walk past the BBC Natural History Unit's front door. That was my inspiration: the hope that one day I might have an opportunity to get involved.' Gregory was fortunate to meet some of the biggest names to have worked there in recent years, including Alastair Fothergill and Doug Allan, who have provided advice and further inspiration.

Gregory describes himself as a 'very driven person' and he is convinced that this is one of the prime movers for 'all the stuff that is happening right now. But at the same time I want to really make sure that I am enjoying it. As much as I want to slog and slave away – and I do – I also want to enjoy the experience of being in the field. It's not just a stepping stone. To say that I don't have career aspirations would be a lie, though. My aim in the next five years is to have shot a feature for *National Geographic* and presented a wildlife documentary for the BBC. This might sound very ambitious. But it's good to be ambitious.'

On a final note, Gregory is keen to stress the ethical position that photographers such as himself confront today. 'First and foremost I think that working in the visual media we are able to change minds and opinions. David Attenborough said that you'll never get people to conserve something unless you can get people to care about it, and they'll never care about it unless they've seen it. People today are so disconnected by their smartphones and social media, but I just want to move away from that and show them the world.'

To see more of Bertie Gregory's work visit bertiegregory.com





Fistral beach,
Newquay, Cornwall.
Canon EOS 6D with
Canon EF 100-400mm
f/4.5-5.6L IS USM lens,
ISO 50, 1/4sec at f/11,
Lee 2-stop and 3-stop
ND filters, polariser,
Manfrotto 055CXP03
tripod, Manfrotto 405
Pro Geared Head, two
images at 370mm
and 105mm merged

Continuing on his quest to learn as much as he can about different photographic styles, Pete Bridgwood enjoys an enlightening coastal shoot with seascape master David Baker

When I started writing this column six years ago, my original brief was to inform and inspire. This is my 80th piece, and sharing my musings here has been an absolute delight; my passion for writing is superseded by the utter joy of photographing all those wonderful places, and meeting so many incredible and creative photographers on my journey. One of the choices I made early on was to deliberately avoid any stylistic tendency. To ensure variety I have made a conscious effort to photograph in different places and in different styles. But one thing I never anticipated was the huge benefit such forced variety would bring to my own work.

A common angst for photographers is that we yearn to discover our own style. Our landscape

heroes have spent years honing their craft to create increasingly distinctive imagery. It seems sensible that, if we want to be like them, we should try to find our own style, but in reality when we are ready our style will find us. Even the most accomplished photographers have a secret understanding that, however stylised one becomes, experimentation fuels creativity.

There are various ways of widening our artistic perspective: we can visit the locations featured in our favourite photographs and try to emulate or better them compositionally, we can spend time photographing with others, either on bespoke workshops or, if we are lucky enough to have talented photographer friends, on a privately arranged shoot. So it was that I visited Fistral Beach one stormy afternoon to shoot

with seascape supremo David Baker. I wanted to enrich my own coastal experience and understand how he captures the spirit of the sea so dramatically.

Choice of viewpoint was critical: low down, to obscure the horizon, and at a distance from the shore to compress perspective and create pronounced layering of the waves using a long focal length of 370mm. Some experimentation revealed an optimum shutter speed of 1/4sec to render the waves most perfectly, and two neutral density filters were required to enable such a long exposure. The sky was captured separately using a much shorter focal length of 105mm to create a more expansive cloudscape, with cloud formations fortuitously mirroring the shapes of the wave crests.

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February - 10 days - from £3,495

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ND grad filters**



GO DEEP INTO THE FOREST...

Russ Barnes shows you how to capture sensational arboreal images

How to create tree images with soul

Discover how to take your tree and woodland photography to the next level, as Russ Barnes reveals how to produce compelling arboreal images that stand out from the crowd

Creating unique imagery as landscape photographers is definitely getting harder, and finding distinctive subject matter that doesn't feel like it's been seen before can be challenging.

I have a theory as to why it is important to seek out unfamiliar and anonymous viewpoints: when I recognise a view or location in a photograph it often stops me from truly looking into the frame and engaging with what's actually there. I believe this is because if I'm familiar with what I'm looking at, I subconsciously glaze over and defer

to a memory or impression of a place, rather than the real story on show.

I want people to connect with my compositions on a deeper level, and photographing trees is my attempt to achieve this. The subject matter I seek out in woodland is not only unique but also pretty much unidentifiable in terms of location. That's incredibly appealing because it gives me the opportunity to create something with atmosphere, presence and personality without the viewer immediately thinking they've seen it all before.



above left 'Like Spindles'. Accentuating height through the use of portrait orientation adds to the feeling of frailty. Nikon D800E with Zeiss 25mm f/2 ZF.2 lens, ISO 100, 1/6sec at f/16, Lee Landscape polariser

above right 'Shine On'. Low sun dispersed through morning mist can provide a glorious and atmospheric backdrop. Nikon D800E with Sigma 35mm f/1.4 Art lens, ISO 100, 1/80sec at f/8

CAPTURING IMAGES WITH MEANING

Living on the edge of the West Midlands I remain pretty jealous of photographers who live near dramatic coastal locations or have easy access to spectacular places such as the Lake District, but I've learned to love my local landscapes and to just get on with it. Fortunately I'm surrounded by trees, and that's probably why I've ended up producing a portfolio largely based on them. I've certainly learned that there is just as much potential to craft something genuinely ethereal yards

from my front door as there is in one of our stunning national parks.

I hear a lot of people say that shooting in woodland is complicated, and I do share that view, but dedicating real time in these environments means that, eventually, seeking out compositions becomes instinctive. The answer lies in understanding your subject and thinking about the story you are trying to tell in your photograph. There are many aspects of trees that we can focus on. They can be full of



colour or bare and skeletal; they can be slight or majestic. They certainly move with the breeze, and in groups they appear to have complex interlinking relationships. That's a lot of possibilities to think about and choose from. Above all, though, each photograph must have meaning; I always ask myself what it is I am trying to say with each composition under consideration.

Creating drama

In my effort to create photographs with impact I try to capture the subject's presence and mood. There are four critical things I think about to produce each of my images: which characteristic I am trying to bring out; the angle and availability of light; subject separation; and the overall ambience of the scene.

Of course lens choice can dramatically alter any composition. I often elect to use a telephoto or tilt-shift lens in woodland, but choosing a wideangle and filling the photograph corner to corner with the structure of a tree ensures maximum impact. Soft sidelight helps to create depth and shadow while thin morning mist ensures backgrounds melt away, allowing the frame of my subject to make a bold statement. Using the sun as a spotlight is also a favourite tactic of mine, and can help make the scene feel like the stage. And there's the thing – stories and performance; I want to create theatre. At the least I aim to produce a photograph that pulls the viewer in with a touch of magic.

PRO TIPS

- » Mist helps a great deal with subject separation, but as an alternative you could try using wide apertures between f/2 and f/4.
- » The most atmospheric images are possible at sunrise – commit and set the alarm clock early, you'll rarely see mist later in the day.

above 'Speak to Me'. Sunlight from above can appear like stage lights. Nikon D800E with Nikon 70-200mm f/2.8 VR II lens at 140mm, ISO 100, 1/50sec at f/11

below 'Grand Gestures'. A frame-filling tree has presence. Nikon D800E with Zeiss 25mm ZF.2 lens, ISO 100, 1/40sec at f/11





THE ART OF THE LONE TREE

The thought of depicting a single tree may lead many landscape photographers to immediately cry 'cliché', but this type of image doesn't necessarily have to fulfil the stereotypical view of a tree standing in solitude on a hillside somewhere. There's more than one way to consider every concept.

I learned a long time ago that everything in an image competes for attention. Many photographers and artists understand that what's left out is often as important as what's included in a composition. You'll find that the sky features minimally in my tree photography; this ensures a sense of confinement and enclosure. You'll also find me cropping the tops off many trees. Not everyone seems to agree with this approach, but I believe we don't always need to see a subject in its entirety in order to appreciate it – and I think it's important to leave something to the viewer's imagination. Above all, I want to share what I see in trees – to reveal the intricacy of their neuron-like structures, the fine detail of their branches, the myriad textures, colours and tones.

Spring and mid-autumn are great times to shoot – there are wonderful opportunities to see trees thinly veiled with shimmering colour, and you get that fine balance between the visible structure and the life of leaves. These are the times I focus on single

trees, putting them front and centre, and there's only really one way to shoot detail like this – pick up a telephoto and start tightening the composition until the soul of your vision is left.

I should say that the more predictable impression of a solitary tree also offers a very enticing prospect for me. As much as I enjoy honing in on my subject, I equally relish the feeling of negative space. In my view, if you want to enhance the feeling of space and scale, nothing is more effective than a wideangle and a panoramic aspect ratio such as 16:9. The sensation of depth behind your subject towards a distant backdrop also helps to depict emptiness in a landscape. Certainly, the fewer distracting elements there are in the final image, the more powerful your composition will be.

PRO TIPS

- » Go with crops such as 16:9, 2:1 and 3:1 to really accentuate width and scale.
- » I always shoot a series of images in portrait orientation for stitching together later into a panorama.
- » Skies need to contribute something if I am to include them – consider them a competing element in your final photograph. Large areas of empty sky add absolutely nothing for me.





left 'Fractures'. I used my imagination and thought about a broken mirror when I composed this one. The foreground trees were all the same distance from the front of the lens.

Nikon D800E with Nikon 45mm f/2.8 PC-e lens, ISO 100, 1/80sec at f/4

below 'Precious Metals'. If I could take images like this every day I'd never leave the forest!

Nikon D800E with Nikon 45mm f/2.8 PC-e lens ISO 100, 1/50sec at f/4

opposite top 'Colours of Bolehill'. There is nothing quite like showing your subject in all its glory. I love the iridescent shroud of leaves.

Nikon D800E with Nikon 70-200mm f/2.8 VR II lens at 200mm, ISO 100, 1/100sec at f/5.6

opposite bottom 'Unexpected Winter'. This hill in Warwickshire goes on and on, with nothing but this single tree and a few sheep. The sky contributed to the scene.
Nikon D800 with Nikon 70-200mm f/2.8 VR II lens at 125mm, ISO 100, 1/320sec at f/8, six images stitched

COMPOSING WITH TILT-SHIFT

If I had to suggest using just one lens for tree photography, a top recommendation would be a tilt-shift lens such as the Nikon 45mm f/2.8 PC-e.

Tilt-shifts are not usually very cheap, but they are incredibly useful and open up possibilities in photography like no other lens can.

The tilt function allows us to do some very interesting things by altering planes of focus and depth of field. The shift function helps us to avoid keystone effects (converging verticals) and can also help to create distortion-free stitched panoramas. When you start to list these features, suddenly the price seems a bit more palatable – especially as they offer superb overall image quality, too.

One of the reasons why I don't use a wideangle very often in woods is because I dislike distortion. The last thing I want is trees bending in or out of the edge of my image. This is where the clever shift function comes in.

Creative effects with tilt-shift

Tilt-shift lenses can also be used to add some creative blur. To achieve this effect, the lens is orientated to put a vertical (or horizontal) plane of focus across one side of the frame. You need to select around five degrees of tilt, and a wide aperture somewhere between f/2.8 and f/4. This results in a sharper plane of focus through one side of the photograph than the other, which softens

down beautifully. I use this method to pull the viewer's eye to where I want it in the frame. When mixed with elements such as ethereal light or soft mist, you have the ingredients to create something quite surreal with potential to hold attention.



PRO TIPS

» Both Nikon and Canon make 45mm tilt-shift lenses. For full-frame cameras, this is an ideal focal length for woodland photography. Third-party adapters for a variety of lens types are also available.

» Metering can be somewhat random when using tilt-shift, so make sure you use your camera's histogram to avoid large, overexposed out-of-focus areas.

» The best things in life require dedication and a bit of time and patience – getting to grips with using tilt-shift lenses is one of these, but you will be rewarded for your efforts.

SEEING THE WOOD FOR THE TREES

Composition is key to any type of photography, and in woodland we need to use every trick in the book for the best chance of holding our viewer's attention.

1 Use corners

Corners are great for lead-in lines. I use the approach sparingly, but when I see an opportunity to make a statement I don't hesitate. Silver birch is my favourite tree, and using the bottom right-hand corner as an anchor gave an incredibly strong lead-in line through the photograph.

2 Depict movement

Trees are far from inanimate objects, so utilising ND filters or screw-on infrared filters to enable longer exposures is a wonderful way of capturing the spirit of movement in trees.

3 Frame it up

There is nothing like placing dark trees at the edge of a frame to draw the eye into the centre of the image, inviting the viewer to look deeper into the photograph.

4 Let the light do the talking

You don't need to rely on mist for subject separation; it's transient and not always easy to predict. The separation in this image is handled through colour variation rather than using misty conditions or a wide aperture.

5 Reflect on your subject

We can use water in all sorts of ways to improve composition. There's nothing I like more than images that enjoy an abstract or impressionistic quality due to the flow and movement of water.



'Full Tilt'.
Nikon D800E with Nikon 45mm f/2.8 PC-e lens, ISO 100, 1/10sec at f/16



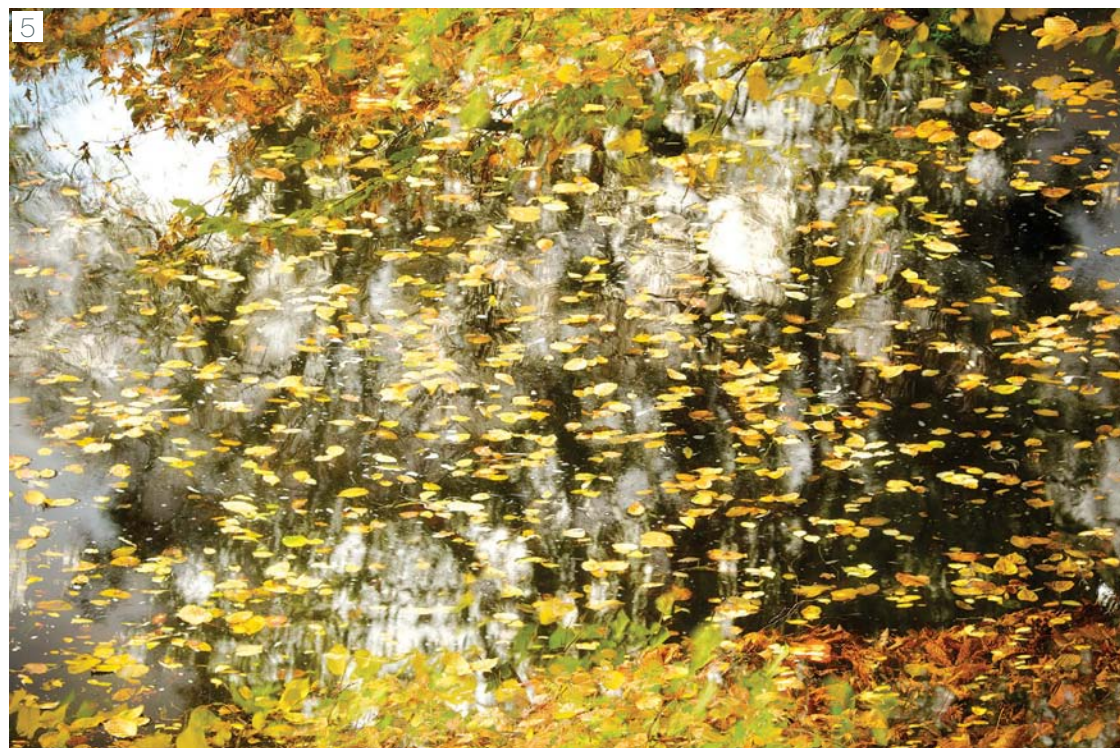
'In the Trees'.
Nikon D800 with Nikon 70-200mm f/2.8 VR II lens at 70mm, ISO 100, 54sec at f/5.6, Hoya R72 infrared filter



'Black and White Wood'.
Nikon D800E with Nikon 70-200mm f/2.8 VR II lens at 135mm, ISO 100, 1/20sec at f/5.6



'Painting with Jack'.
Nikon D800E with Nikon 70-200mm f/2.8 VR II lens at 200mm, ISO 100, 1/25sec at f/10



'Drift'.
Fuji X-E2 with Fuji 18-55mm f/2.8-f/4 lens at 55mm, ISO 200, 1/5sec at f/8



INFRARED – THE UNSEEN SPECTRUM

I'm always interested in any approach or technique that enables me to push the creative boundaries and, just like tilt-shift, infrared offers something unique. Recording anything in infrared is made possible by the use of special filters that block most of the visible spectrum. With digital photography, there are two ways to achieve this: you can either buy a screw-on filter, such as the Hoya R72, which sits in front of your lens (the budget option, costing £25+ for a secondhand filter) or you can get a camera body converted at sensor level by a professional outfit (the expensive option, costing at least £300+).

There are distinct advantages to the sensor level conversion, mainly associated with the exposure time. With a screw-on filter you might have to expose the sensor for a minute or more (akin to a dark neutral density filter). Using a camera that has been fully converted for infrared will allow you to use near normal exposures.

It's fair to describe infrared as an acquired taste. I really developed my interest in it to take my love of monochromatic images to a new level, and while I don't really enjoy what is known as 'false colour' infrared, I have taken a liking to the metallic native tones that are recorded in the Raw files of my sensor-converted Nikon D800. Using these colours

I've exploited infrared to create a series of photographs of local ponds and water holes, all of which are within a short walk of my home. The purpose of the project, entitled Backwater, is to demonstrate the hidden charisma of these places, which are often dark, dank, neglected, and frankly a little unpleasant.

With infrared you can begin an adventure into the realms of fantasy, where the attention is more about form, texture and light rather than absolute colour. Now imagine combining this with something such as using tilt-shift lenses, and we really are on a less familiar creative curve.

'Fairy Dust'. If only you could see what this pool looks like in normal daylight... I guarantee most photographers wouldn't give it a second glance.
Nikon D800 (720nm IR infrared converted) with Nikon 85mm f/1.4 G lens, ISO 200, 1/2000sec at f/2

PRO TIPS

- » Infrared works best in bright sunlight, but I've also used it to great effect in rain and fog. April to October is the peak time for shooting infrared, when images have the potential to positively shine.
- » Combining infrared with other creative tools such as tilt-shift lenses opens up huge potential for your photography to take a different path and carve out something unique.
- » Not all lenses work well with infrared due to various coatings and internal reflections. This can lead to hotspots, which can ruin an image. Review which lenses work best at kolarivision.com/lenshotspot.html.

BEAUTY IN OBSCURITY

As I alluded to in the first part of this feature, photographing woodland is not without its challenges. There are probably easier subjects to master, especially when you consider that most forest you'll step into is unmanaged and overloaded with infinitely random natural designs. There are no easy answers to this conundrum. I've had to work hard to train my eye to find order in disorder – it takes a lot of practice and dedication.

One thing that can help is to view a smaller area of the scene using a telephoto lens – I carry the exceptional Nikon 70-200mm f/4 for this purpose. I will often begin by seeking out an area of the wood that has general appeal to me. I look for stimulating light, interesting shapes or repeating patterns, perhaps a small group of trees that seems to transmit something together. I will then take in the scene with my 70-200mm lens, slowly zooming in and out until I have a balanced, purposeful composition that speaks to me. As I have already said, it's often as much about what you leave out as what you include in your photograph, and this is of great importance here.

Working from the outside in

In my experience, working your way round the edge of woodland, rather than from its centre, is likely to yield better quality possibilities. One of the reasons is that the trees tend to be a bit more dispersed and the light is able to penetrate the space. This usually

allows you to see compositions more clearly, and also means there are fewer obstacles, such as overhanging branches, to impede your shot. Don't assume that you have to take a hard-fought route, tripping your way through thick undergrowth, to find the best scenery; I've lost count of how many times I've stopped the car at a roadside because of something that catches my eye.

Above all, it's my belief that it all comes back to finding and presenting something genuinely inspiring to others, preferably a composition that has its own narrative or story to tell. Once visualised, these are the thoughts that keep me transfixed on how the photograph will communicate to the viewer – every other component is just a distraction, and you should be looking to leave these out.

PRO TIPS

- » I don't stick to it religiously by any means, but the rule of thirds is a helping hand when it comes to really complex images with lots of features in. I'm always after balance in some way.
- » Look for relationships between the objects in the frame and then work to bring them out. Be clear about what your photograph is saying.
- » Consider your woodland in smaller, bite-sized chunks and avoid being overwhelmed by the sheer volume of what's there. Light is king – look for where it's performing.

10 STEPS TO SUCCESS

There's a lot to think about when confronted with hundreds of trees, but my best advice is to try to empty your mind and approach things without preconceptions. A little bit of thought goes a long way, but I really don't plan my trips, other than packing a bag and picking a general location. All the same, there are still a few things to bear in mind...

- 1 I carry a tripod and geared head on every shoot. Even when the sun is up high, light doesn't penetrate woodland well, usually leaving you in shadow.
- 2 Do everything you can to avoid vibration – use a cable release for every shot.
- 3 Consider the story in every image and know what you want to say.
- 4 Get to know your local landscape – there is hidden beauty everywhere.
- 5 Be mindful of the environment; trampling on wildflowers is not going to win you any friends.
- 6 Spend time understanding when and where mist might form for atmospheric photography.
- 7 It pays to get out early, being in the woods when the sun is low and side-lighting the trees are great conditions.
- 8 Practice makes perfect. Nothing comes easy, especially artistic endeavour.
- 9 Attention to detail is everything. Peer into backgrounds and be aware of your angles.
- 10 Connect with the forest: listen to it and take it in. Use that experience as the source of your inspiration.

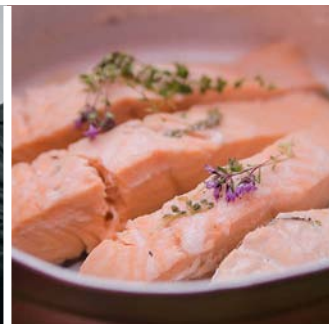


'Eye of the Needles'. I like to let the light do the talking, but I also love the way fog sucks the colour out of things – the subdued tones really add something here.

Nikon D800E with Nikon 70-200mm f/4 at 75mm, ISO 100, 1/40sec at f/8

TAKE PART!

Enter our 'trees' competition – turn to page 111 for details



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QUICK GUIDE TO...

ND grad filters

Reckon you don't need to bother with ND grads in the digital age? Lee Frost begs to differ – and he has some essential advice to help you get the most out of them

How many times have you composed a great shot with a dramatic sky, only to discover when you check the image on your preview screen that, while the landscape looks fine, the sky is overexposed and washed out? Naive photographers shrug their shoulders and think, 'No worries, I'll rescue that later,' which is fine if there's something to rescue. But if the sky's so overexposed that no detail has recorded, it can't be brought back.

The solution is to use an ND grad filter to tone down the brightness of the sky so that when you expose for the landscape, the sky is also correctly exposed. Chances are you know this already. But are you using your ND grads correctly? You may think you are, but it's amazing how many photographers get it wrong then end up spending ages trying to correct their mistakes. To ensure that doesn't happen to you, read on.



HOW TO USE ND GRADS



ALIGNING AN ND GRAD

» To align an ND grad, slide it down into the holder while looking through your camera's viewfinder – you should see it darken the sky or any other area you want to tone down. Alternatively, align the grad while looking at your camera's preview screen in live view mode.

» It used to be necessary to take a meter reading and set it in manual mode before putting an ND grad on the lens. Fortunately, modern multi-zone metering systems are very sophisticated so you can align the grad, meter through it and get accurate exposures.

» Don't push the ND grad too far down in the holder – if you do, its effect will be diminished or you'll see a line across the image where the ND zone ended.

If you find yourself doing this it's usually because the grad isn't strong enough for the scene.

» You should rarely need an ND grad stronger than 0.9. If you do, then unless you're shooting at dawn when contrast is great, you're probably over-gradding and the effect will look odd. You can always darken the sky more during post-production.

» There are cheap ND grads available on Amazon and eBay, but always buy from reputable manufacturers such as Lee Filters and Hitech if you want them to be neutral and provide high optical quality – cheap grads often produce colour casts and reduce image sharpness.



PLOCKTON, SCOTLAND: LEFT, NO GRAD; RIGHT, WITH 0.6 ND HARD GRAD

WHICH GRADS?

» Grads come in three main densities – 0.3, 0.6 and 0.9 – which reduce brightness in the areas they affect by one, two and three stops respectively. Some manufacturers also produce a 1.2 ND grad (4-stop reduction), plus 0.45 and 0.75 grads, which reduce brightness by 1.5 and 2.5 stops respectively.

» You can manage without the intermediate strengths, but it's worth buying 0.3, 0.6 and 0.9. The 0.3 is actually too weak in most situations, but you can always use it with a 0.9 grad when contrast is really high, so you get a four-stop reduction (like a 1.2 grad). A 0.9 tends to be used mainly at dawn and dusk, or when shooting into the light, while the 0.6 grad is ideal for general use. If you're unsure which one you need, take a test shot with a 0.6 grad, check the image and histogram on your camera's preview screen, then switch to either a 0.3 or, more likely, a 0.9, if the effect isn't right. It doesn't matter if the sky's a little light, providing you haven't blown the brighter areas – you can select and darken it later.



DUNSTANBURGH CASTLE, NORTHUMBERLAND, 0.9 ND HARD GRAD

HARD OR SOFT?

ND grads come in hard and soft versions. This refers to the transition between the ND and clear parts of the filter – with hard grads the change is quite sudden, while with soft grads it's gentle. Hard grads are better when the horizon is unbroken because they have a more consistent density in the ND zone, so the effect is more defined. They need to be used with care, however, or you'll see a line across the image. Soft grads are more forgiving in terms of leaving signs of their use, especially when the horizon is broken, but they have hardly any effect towards the bottom of the ND zone because the transition to clear is so gentle. At dawn and dusk the sky is brightest at the horizon, where soft grads are at their least effective, so it's tempting to push the grad lower and lower in the holder, or start stacking two or three grads, which is usually the wrong thing to do.

PRO TIPS

1 You can combine ND grads to achieve the desired effect. Using a 0.6 and 0.3, for example, will give you a total density of 0.9 (three stops of brightness reduction), while 0.3 and 0.9 will give you 1.2 (four stops brightness reduction). They can also both be hard or soft or you can use one of each, depending on the scene.

2 If you're shooting a scene with a reflection filling the foreground, use a 0.3 ND grad to cover the sky and scene down to where the reflection begins. This allows you to lighten the reflection by one stop so the exposure is more balanced. Don't overdo it, though – the reflection should never be brighter than the scene.

3 You can combine two ND grads of the same or different densities and align one higher than the other to control the effect they have. One could be a hard grad and the other soft. They could also be in two filter holders connected together so you can angle them independently of each other.

4 ND grads are normally used to tone down the brightness of the sky, but you can also use them to tone down other parts of the scene, such as an area that's sunlit so you can lighten the shady areas with more exposure. They can be aligned at any angle – horizontally, vertically, diagonally, to cover the desired area.

5 When shooting at dawn and dusk, the brightest part of the sky is closest to the horizon. Annoyingly, this is where ND grads are at their weakest. Hitech has overcome the problem by producing a set of 'reverse' ND grads that are lightest at the top and darkest at the bottom of the ND zone.

6 An increasing number of ultra-wideangle lenses, such as the Nikon 14-24mm, Sigma 12-24mm and Samyang 14mm, have a built-in 'petal' lenshood that makes it impossible to use ND grads. Hitech offers a solution in the form of the Lucroit system, which uses 160mm-wide filters and a special push-on holder.



A trip to the Lake District takes East Anglia-based Lee Acaster out of his comfort zone and leads him to reconsider his approach to photographing his quieter local landscapes

There's a speed bump on my road, and it could well be the highest point in East Anglia. There are no snowy peaks, rolling hills or glacier-carved cliffs round here, but since taking up photography it was the only landscape I had ever shot in, and I loved it. That is, at least, until my wife bought me a one-day workshop in the Lake District as a Christmas present. A full day's photography without the constraints of work and young children – I knew it was going to be heaven.

From the moment I reached the other side of the Pennines I was awestruck. It was almost dark as I entered Cumbria, but I couldn't stop myself from turning off the A66 to get a couple of shots before the light disappeared altogether. Back at the hotel, I found myself looking at property prices and working out the logistics of moving house.

The next day exceeded all my expectations. The scenery was breathtaking, the weather was in turn appalling and amazing, and I was rattling off images like there was no tomorrow. Everywhere I looked there were dramatic compositions and stunning vistas. In hindsight I was probably a little overwhelmed, and although I got plenty of shots I am happy with I could have easily spent a month just in the same two locations we visited that day.

The long drive back home took me through a landscape that became progressively flatter and less dramatic, until I traversed the speed bump and arrived at my house. Over the following days I headed out a few times, looking for something to shoot, and returned home having never even left the car. The winter landscapes of ploughed fields and bare hedgerows seemed to have

nothing to offer. I'd left my mojo in Martindale.

I was mulling this over as I headed out for sunrise the next weekend, and it occurred to me that maybe it's not that the landscape is uninspiring; it's just a very different one. In the Lakes you may try to compose the mountainous backgrounds in an interesting manner, but here you can treat the clouds in the sky in the same way. Instead of dry stone walls or valleys to lead the eye in, you can use ripples in the sand or the furrows in a field.

By the time I got to the sweeping sandy beach at Winterton I'd stopped worrying about focal points and brooding peaks, and decided to try working with the landscape rather than against it. East Anglia is beautiful, but it can be hard to translate that beauty into a photograph. But then perhaps that's half the fun.



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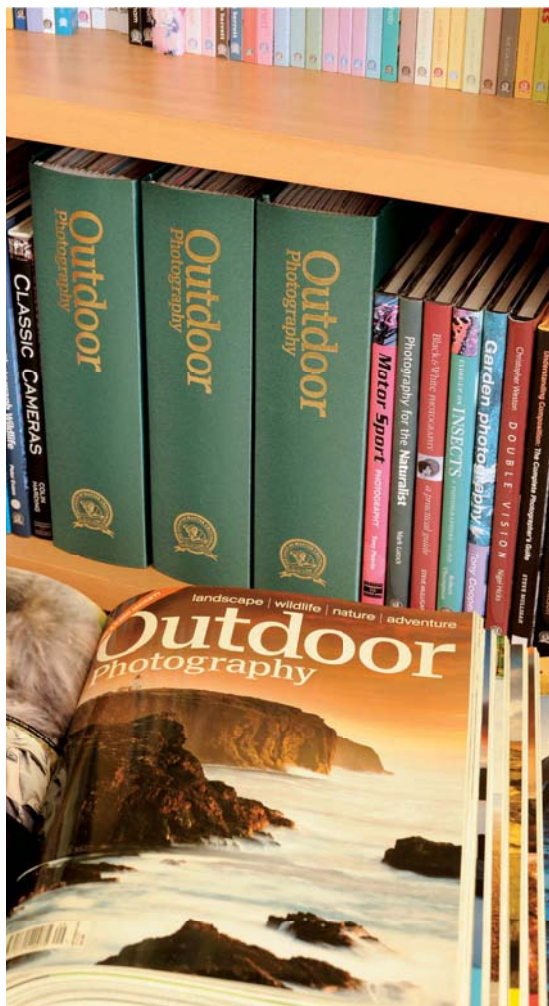
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Seeking impact



It's 10 years since the founding of the International League of Conservation Photographers. Niall Benvie reckons the time has come for conservation photographers to get a whole lot angrier

We were optimistic, a little naive perhaps, but full of energy and the belief that we could forge new partnerships when the International League of Conservation Photographers held its inaugural meeting in Anchorage in October 2005. I spoke about the work I'd done in the Baltic region and we heard many inspiring stories from mainly American photographers about successful campaigns they'd waged through their photography. The driving force behind the organisation at the time, Cristina Mittermeier, told us that we were all in the boat together plugging holes, and that by acting together change could happen.

One of the main objectives was to partner with the scientific and conservation communities to provide the material they need to communicate their findings and messages effectively to a wider world. Well, while there have been some successes in the USA, the mainstream conservation community elsewhere has largely failed to engage with those who should be their natural partners. This I experienced at first hand when working as part of the team on the 2020VISION project in the UK, and many photographers in other parts of the world find it equally difficult to form relationships with conservation agencies that extend beyond supplying cheap images.

In the meantime, we've had a decade of missed biodiversity targets, fishing quota compromises, rising average temperatures and a period of economic austerity with concomitant ecological austerity in which we are expected to accept diminished ecological richness for the sake of economic growth.

And things aren't going to get any better if you believe Naomi Klein's rigorous and devastating analysis of capitalism's role in climate change laid out in her book *This Changes Everything*. American commentator, Derrick Jensen, provides an alternative perspective on the crisis by characterising our relationship with the Earth as that between a psychopath and his victim in the essay *World Gone Mad*. He's not being dramatic for its own sake, simply recognising that we put our own immediate needs ahead of those of every other living thing on the planet without question, and feel nothing. What does most contemporary conservation photography have to say about any of this? Very little, I fear.

Conservation photography, now, needs to make a more direct challenge to – no, attack on – the systems that perpetuate the destruction of our home and to find new partners, perhaps other artists, to collaborate with. There has, after all, been another big change in the last decade; the emergence of social media and all the leverage it offers.

Borrowing language associated with the dark ways people treat each other may help to clarify our abusive relationship with the Earth to the audience. Expressions such as 'hate crimes against nature', 'GDP supremacists' or 'habitat mutilation' are in no way intended to diminish the suffering of human victims; they merely extend the scope of reference to other living organisms and systems. These ideas can provide the themes for a new type of conservation photography that isn't afraid to challenge orthodoxy and reminds viewers that, ultimately, conservation is an ethical process and that the

capacity to exercise restraint is what separates us from other animals. It also needs to provide some answers about what to do 'if you have been affected by this image'.

In a world awash with righteous zealots of all complexions, it's important that 'New Conservation' photographers aren't dismissed as radicalised greens. Let the pictures and their captions do the talking.

Perhaps the biggest hurdle for the conservation movement (including photographers) to overcome concerns how people tend to make decisions in everyday life. Imagine a hand giving a thumbs-up. The thumb represents reason – how we like to think we arrive at decisions. In reality, it's the four fingers tucked out of sight that we tend to employ instead:

- » **Experience.** I've always done things this way. It works, so why change?
- » **Expedience.** This is the easiest way. Why make my life more difficult?
- » **Economy.** This is the cheapest way. Why make myself poorer?
- » **Emotion.** It just feels right. I trust my instinct.

Reasoning with people doesn't work, especially when the orthodoxy – that economic growth is the answer for everything – is so deeply embedded. No one employing an ounce of reason could conclude that the way we treat the Earth is good, but no alternative seems better and the four Es above conspire against change. How we undermine these norms, rather than oppose individual destructive developments, will provide the challenge for the next generation of conservation photographers.

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Marazion beach, Cornwall, by Andrew Ray

ACCESS RATING

These are based around an 'averagely fit' person. Below are loose guidelines to what the ratings mean (N.B. they are assigned by the author and not verified by OP. Walk distances are one-way only):



1/5 Easy access – you can pretty much get straight out of your car and quickly be at the viewpoint via good quality paths.



2/5 Some gentle walking – generally less than a half mile – is involved, which may be on mixed quality paths.



3/5 A walk of up to about two miles, over quite easy terrain.



4/5 Medium length hike – up to about four miles over mixed terrain, possibly with some quite steep gradients.



5/5 The most difficult access. Long hike over challenging terrain (e.g. mountains/summits/steep coastal terrain); or involves travelling over particularly extreme ground (e.g. scrambling on rocks/exposed coastal paths or mountain ridges) over any distance.

LOCATIONS GUIDE

42 Viewpoints of the month

- 1 Falls of Dochart Perthshire
- 2 Derry Cairngorm Aberdeenshire

46 Viewpoints

- 3 Sgùrr nan Gilleann Isle of Skye
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- 5 Wain Wath Force North Yorkshire
- 6 Ragleth Hill Shropshire
- 7 Bakewell Bridge Derbyshire
- 8 Porthtowan Cornwall
- 9 Durlston Bay Dorset
- 10 An Sidhean Stirling



Map plottings are approximate

Falls of Dochart, Perthshire

During a summer trip to photograph the spectacular Falls of Dochart, in the heart of Scotland, Carlton Doudney succeeds in avoiding the tourists but encounters another, unexpected challenge

The Falls of Dochart are located in the village of Killin, where the river Dochart broadens out and flows over a series of rocks. Fans of the 1959 version of *The 39 Steps* with Kenneth More will recognise them in the background of one of the scenes.

The location is very popular with visitors, and when the water is low people will be clambering all over the rocks. To avoid the crowds I decided to visit at dawn; with the sun rising so early at this time of year, all respectable tourists would still be in their beds and I'd have the place to myself, or so I thought.

As usual, you can take nothing for granted when it comes to shooting landscapes. The morning turned out to be rather overcast, but at least the rocks were clear of people. Having been here

many times before, I knew where I wanted to position myself for various shots, so I parked close to the falls and proceeded with my first few captures. Taken a couple of paces from the car, my first shot had lots of texture and rich shades of green, with a few foreground flowers for added colour. With an ND grad in place to hold back the sky, I used a long exposure to smooth the flow of the river.

I progressed from the edge of the village in search of better angles, clambering through gaps in the wall that lines the road, until I eventually reached the Bridge of Dochart. Originally built in 1760, the bridge is a popular shooting spot. But because it's narrow, and there's no pavement, it's difficult to take your time setting up a camera. Up to this point, however, there had been no traffic

26 miles from Crieff | 43 miles from Perth

ACCESS RATING     

PLANNING YOUR TRIP

How to get there Heading north on the A9 towards Perth, take the first left at the Broxden roundabout. After a short distance take the next left for Crieff on the A85, carry on through the town, on through Comrie and along the shores of Loch Earn. At Lochearnhead, turn right up through Glen Ogle, taking a right at Lix Toll to Killin.

What to shoot Extensive tumbling waterfalls and rich woodland backed by a dramatic mountain vista.

Best time of day Early morning.

Nearest food/drink There are many tearooms in Killin.

Nearest accommodation Falls of Dochart Inn, Grays Street, Killin, FK21 8SL, 01567 820270, fallsdochartin.co.uk.

Other times of year Autumn for colourful foliage; winter for snow and frost.

Ordnance Survey map LR 51

Nearby locations Loch Earn (7 miles); Birks of Aberfeldy (23 miles).



at all so, feeling confident, I set up my tripod in the middle of the bridge.

As I lined up my shot, a distant noise caught my attention: the unmistakable sound of a diesel engine labouring. I returned to my duties but was distracted as the sound got louder and closer. Assuming it was just a delivery truck, I turned to see what was making the noise. The cab of a massive lorry appeared with a huge trailer loaded with logs. I threw my bag over my shoulder,



Taken a couple of paces from the car, my first shot had lots of texture and rich shades of green, with a few foreground flowers for added colour

*Canon EOS 5D MkII
with 17-40mm lens
at 17mm, ISO 100,
10sec at f/16,
0.9 ND grad,
IR release, tripod*

grabbed my tripod and made for the end of the bridge, out of harm's way.

Having returned to my spot, it wasn't long before an empty logging lorry came from the other direction, ready for a new load. So it went on as a game of cat and mouse, with me running off the bridge every time another lorry came along,

accompanied by a wave of thanks from the driver. The key to the bridge captures was to have all settings ready, bar a check on focus and alignment, so I could quickly fire off my shots and be prepared to run.

The shoot was a lesson in multitasking, keeping one eye on the photography and the other on what was happening around

me. Ultimately, however, one of my favourite shots was one of the first I took, shown here; it's a slightly different angle to the norm, which is often the key to photographing a popular spot. I could have avoided the exhausting exercise of running on and off the bridge, but at least it was a good workout.



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Derry Cairngorm, Aberdeenshire

Magnificent views and dramatic weather await Keith Fergus atop one of the Cairngorms' mighty munros, and he works late into the evening to capture the fast-changing scene

The Cairngorm mountains offer some of the finest walking anywhere in the British Isles – they also offer myriad photographic opportunities. Most routes require a long walk in, however. During this particular trip I decided to wild camp in order to break up the 17-mile ascent over two munros, Derry Cairngorm and Ben Macdui, allowing me to make the most of June's long daylight hours.

I set off at 5pm from the car park at Linn of Dee and wandered through the delightful Glen Lui. Beyond Derry Lodge I quickly gained height as I rounded Creag Bad an t-Seabhaig. By 8pm my tent was pitched just beneath the 1,150m summit of Derry Cairngorm, and I began the process of finding a definitive viewpoint from which to photograph the awesome setting. At first, a distant Lochnagar vied for my attention, but soon I was focusing on the vista that lay to the south: Carn Crom, Sgùrr Mòr and Beinn Iutharn Mhor drew the eye to the mighty form of Beinn a'Ghlò.

Late evening brought strong winds, driving in heavy clouds that added drama to the scene. With my camera firmly on its tripod, I began to compose my image. The immediate foreground held little interest, so I decided to extend my wideangle lens to its 40mm limit, which enabled me to pick out the splash of sunlight on the flanks of Carn Crom. Over the course of the next hour I played with a variety of compositions.



As the sun dropped, much of the landscape was thrown into shadow. I used one-stop and three-stop ND grads to balance the scene, while a polariser accentuated the warm light. Eventually I settled on my composition. An aperture of f/11 and careful focusing kept the image sharp throughout, and the corresponding exposure was 0.3 seconds (I was glad I had humped my tripod up

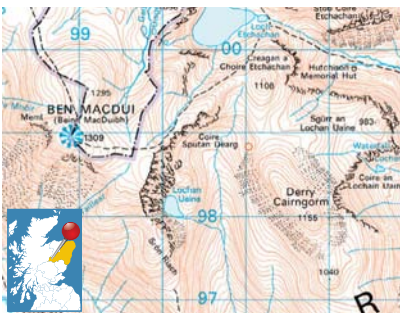
the mountain). I bracketed several times before the biting cold wind drove me into my tent for the night.

After an uncomfortable sleep under canvas I woke to two inches of snow. My ascent of Ben Macdui was enveloped in cloud, and my camera never left its bag for the remainder of the trip. The few hours I spent alone on Derry Cairngorm were worth every step, though.

A distant Beinn a'Ghlò from Derry Cairngorm.
Canon EOS 50D with 17-40mm lens at 40mm, ISO 100, 0.3sec at f/11, 0.3 and 0.9 ND grads, polariser, cable release, tripod

10 miles from Braemar | 60 miles from Perth | **ACCESS RATING**

PLANNING YOUR TRIP



How to get there From Braemar, take the minor Linn of Dee Road for six miles to the Linn of Dee car park. Follow a well-worn track through Glen Lui to Derry Lodge. Once across the Derry Burn, follow a path as it climbs steeply north-west around Creag Bad an t-Seabhaig and then Carn Crom. It is then a prolonged, steady ascent north. The terrain is, in the main, easily crossed, but there are some short sections of boulder-covered ground. Eventually the summit plateau of Derry Cairngorm is reached.

What to shoot The walk grants ample opportunities to photograph Glen Lui and the Lui Water. From Derry Cairngorm there are views of Ben Macdui, Loch Etchachan, the landscape of the Cairngorms National Park and distant mountains such as

Lochnagar and Beinn a'Ghlò. Ptarmigan are also regularly spotted along the summit plateau.

Best time of day Late evening and sunset. During June, Derry Cairngorm offers views of the sun setting behind Ben Macdui.

Nearest food/drink Moorfield House Hotel, Chapel Brae, Braemar, AB35 5YP, 01339 741244, moorfieldhousehotel.com.

Nearest accommodation Moorfield House Hotel – as above.

Other times of year Late summer for heather in full bloom; winter for snow-covered mountains.

Ordnance Survey map LR 403 and LR 404

Nearby locations Linn of Dee (4 miles); Creag Choinnich (10 miles).



© Lorraine Yates

Sgùrr nan Gilleann, Isle of Skye

Sgùrr nan Gilleann rises to 964m and is one of 12 munros located within the magnificent Cuillin range. This spectacular peak rises above the river Sligachan at the entrance to Glen Sligachan, and also provides opportunities to photograph the river Sligachan, and Cuillin mountains such as Marsco.

How to get there From Portree, head south on the A87 until you reach Sligachan. From Inverness, take the A82 south to Invermoriston, turn right on to the A887 then continue on to the A87 heading west. Follow the A87 over the Skye Bridge until you reach Sligachan.

Parking is located on the left, just before the Sligachan bridge.

What to shoot Views of the Cuillins, the river Sligachan, waterfalls and Sligachan bridge.

Best time of day Sunset and dusk, as the shadows emphasise the ruggedness of the mountains.

Nearest food/drink Sligachan Hotel, Sligachan, IV47 8SW, 01478 650204, sligachan.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Sligachan Hotel – as above.

Other times of year Autumn for the rivers and waterfalls in spate and for the colours; winter for snow-covered mountains and ice formations.

Ordnance Survey map LR 32

Nearby locations Loch Ainort (9 miles); Glen Brittle (14 miles).



9 miles from Portree | 103 miles from Inverness

ACCESS RATING     

4 miles from Penzance | 27 miles from Truro

ACCESS RATING     

Marazion beach, Cornwall

The view looking south from Marazion beach towards St Michael's Mount is one of the most famous in the UK. During the summer months it is possible to capture the north face of the island illuminated by the late evening sun, and on Sunday and Tuesday evenings the castle is usually floodlit.

How to get there From the east, follow the A30 though Cornwall. At the Newtown roundabout (three miles east of Penzance), take the second exit. Turn left after a quarter of a mile and follow the coast road into the village of Marazion (one mile). Turn right opposite the fish and chip shop and park in the slipway car park.

What to shoot St Michael's Mount, seabirds and sand patterns.

Best time of day Evenings or twilight, ideally during a receding tide.

Nearest food/drink Godolphin Arms, West End, Marazion, TR17 0EN, 01736 888510, godolphinarms.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Rosario B&B, The Square, Marazion, TR17 0BH, 01736 711998, rosario-marazion.co.uk.

Other times of year Winter for sunsets.

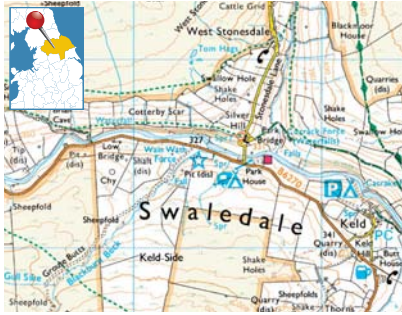
Ordnance Survey map LR 203

Nearby locations Praa Sands (4 miles); Mousehole harbour (7 miles).



© Andrew Ray





Wain Wath Force, North Yorkshire

The river Swale boasts many of Yorkshire's finest waterfalls, and Wain Wath Force, near Keld, is certainly one of the highlights. Backed by the towering limestone cliffs of Cotterby Scar and surrounded by hawthorn, rowan and birch trees, it enjoys a truly idyllic setting. It is also easily accessed – just beware the midges on a still summer's evening!

How to get there Take the B6270 running through Swaledale and, from Thwaite, continue north past Angram and Keld. Follow the road for a further mile, past the turning to Tan Hill Inn, and you will see the falls on your right soon afterwards, with plenty of room to park on the roadside.

1 mile from Keld | 24 miles from Richmond | ACCESS RATING

What to shoot The main falls are beautifully located, with trees and the steep, limestone scar behind. Unless the water levels are too high, cross over the small tributary on to the boulders and pebbles directly in front of the falls to get an unobstructed view. There are also some mini falls just downstream.

Best time of day Late afternoon to early evening, with the low sun hitting the scar and trees behind the falls.

Nearest food/drink Keld Lodge, Keld, DL11 6LL, 01748 886259, keldlodge.com.

Nearest accommodation Butt House, Keld, DL11 6LJ, 01748 886374, butthousekeld.co.uk.

Other times of year Autumn for the best foliage colour; winter for the potential of frozen falls.

Ordnance Survey map LR 91

Nearby locations Stone barns, Thwaite (2 miles); Muker Meadows (4 miles).



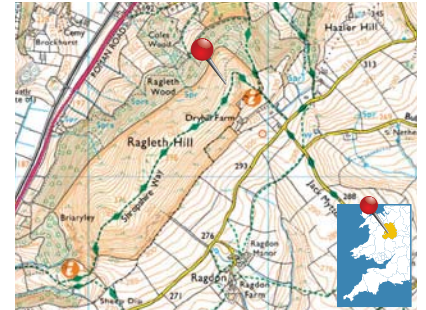
© Lizzie Shepherd

1 mile from Church Stretton | 11 miles from Shrewsbury | ACCESS RATING

Ragleth Hill, Shropshire

Ragleth Hill on a sunny June evening is a serene place to view the valleys of Long Mynd, known locally as batches and hollows. Gaze westwards into the setting sun to watch the contours of the smooth, curved ridges of this heather-clad upland area slowly fall into shadow.

How to get there From Church Stretton on the A49, follow the B4371 for about three quarters of a mile towards Much Wenlock. Park in the lay-by on the left, at the top of the hill on the outskirts of Church Stretton. Walk up Ragden Lane, opposite the lay-by, passing a transmitter and properties on your right. Take the second signed path on your right (just



after pig-shaped topiary). Climb up, crossing two stiles, then bear left to the summit ridge.

What to shoot Look west for the bare, rounded shoulders of the Long Mynd, and east for the 17-mile, tree-lined Wenlock Edge.

Best time of day The ridge of the hill runs north to south, making dawn and dusk great times for shooting east and west.

Nearest food/drink Ginger and Green, 3 Sandford Avenue, Church Stretton, SY6 6BW, 01694 724644, gingerandgreen.org.uk.

Nearest accommodation Highlands B&B, Hazler Road, Church Stretton, SY6 7AF, 01694 723737, highlandsbandb.co.uk.

Other times of year Winter is good here.

Ordnance Survey map LR 137

Nearby locations Caer Caradoc (1.5 miles); Stiperstones (8 miles).



© Simon Whaley



Bakewell Bridge, Derbyshire

Bakewell is a beautiful market town situated in the heart of the Peak District National Park. It is of course famous for its Bakewell pudding, but it is also a stone's throw from an abundance of photogenic locations such as Lathkill Dale and Chatsworth. Bakewell itself also has a lot to offer photographically, including its fabulous 13th-century packhorse bridge, which crosses the river Wye.

How to get there Enter Bakewell from the north on the A619. Just as the road bends 90° to the right, branch off left and park in the roadside car park. From here it is a short walk to the banks of the river by the old bridge.

What to shoot The medieval bridge from both sides, and the river Wye itself; the nearby weir and local birdlife (usually ducks and swans).

Best time of day The bridge offers

potential throughout the day.

Nearest food/drink The Red Lion, The Square, Bakewell, DE45 1BT, 01629 812054, red-lion-bakewell.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation The Red Lion – as above.

Other times of year Autumn for colour in the surrounding foliage.

Ordnance Survey map OL 24

Nearby locations Monsal Dale (3 miles); Magpie Mine (4 miles).

11 miles from Buxton | 13 miles from Chesterfield | ACCESS RATING

5 miles from Redruth | 10 miles from Truro | ACCESS RATING

Porthtowan, Cornwall

Porthtowan is a village on the north coast of Cornwall, situated on a spectacular stretch of heritage coast. Great views of both the beach and village can be obtained by climbing the coast path on either side of the cove. This can be particularly rewarding during the summer months, when the area is bathed in late evening sunlight.

How to get there From the Chiverton Cross roundabout on the A30 (six miles west of Truro), take the B3277 towards St Agnes for two miles. Turn left at the crossroads near the Seven Milestone garage and follow the unclassified road to another crossroads, then carry straight on for two miles to reach Porthtowan. Turn right near the bottom of the valley



and follow the road to park in the beach car park. Leave the car park by the main entrance and turn right on to the coast path, which climbs up the north side of the cove.

What to shoot Landscapes and coastal flora from the coast path; sunset from the beach.

Best time of day Late afternoons and evenings are optimal.

Nearest food/drink Blue Bar, Eastcliff, Beach Road, Porthtowan, TR4 8AW, 01209 890329, blue-bar.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation The Unicorn Porthtowan, Beach Road, Porthtowan, TR4 8AD, 01209 890244, theunicornporthtowan.co.uk.

Other times of year Winter for people-free images.

Ordnance Survey map LR 203

Nearby locations Portreath beach (4 miles); Wheal Coates engine house (5 miles).



Durlston Bay, Dorset

Durlston Bay is a quiet retreat a short walk from the hustle and bustle of nearby Swanage. It boasts a delightfully rocky shoreline, with Peveril Point at its northern tip and Durlston Castle on the cliff top to the south. The best photography is to be had on the northern shore of the bay, which is quick and easy to reach.

How to get there On entering Swanage, head for the town centre and follow the signs to the pier. Just before the pier, turn right up Seymour Road. About 50 metres up the hill, turn left into the big car park and park at the far end. Walk westward out of the car park down Peveril Point Road and head towards the coastguard station beyond the road. Carry on past the station and you'll find a path to the right, which leads down on to Durlston Bay.

What to shoot The rocky shore with a disused slipway at Peveril Point, the

cliffs and Durlston Castle as a backdrop.

Best time of day Dawn and early morning, as the bay faces east.

Nearest food and drink Gee Whites Seafood Restaurant, The Old Stone Quay, 1 The High Street, Swanage, BH19 2LN, 01929 425720, geewhites.co.uk.

Nearest accommodation Taunton House B&B, 4 Taunton Road, Swanage, BH19 2BY, 01929 425440, tauntonhouse-swanage.com.

Other times of year Winter for low light and dramatic skies.

Ordnance Survey map OL 15

Nearby locations Chapman's Pool (6 miles); Kimmeridge (11.5 miles).



© Sean Lewis



0.5 miles from Swanage | 10 miles from Wareham | ACCESS RATING

9 miles from Callander | 25 miles from Stirling | ACCESS RATING

An Sidhean, Stirling

An Sidhean, which translates as the Fairy Hill, is a knoll at the southern end of Beinn an t-Sidhein, above the village of Strathyre. Although only 546m in height, An Sidhean offers superb views all round, taking in the higher mountains that surround it, and Loch Lubnaig to the south.

How to get there From Stirling, take the A84 north. Pass through Callander, and after nine miles you will arrive at Strathyre. Park in the car park next to the village shop. Walk past the shop then take the minor road on the left across the bridge, then take the road to the school on the left. Next, turn right on to a marked

track up the hill, and use an OS map to follow the path up An Sidhean.

What to shoot Shoot south towards Loch Lubnaig and east towards Ben Vorlich.

Best time of day At this time of year, early mornings and evenings are usually best for sidelight across the hills around Loch Lubnaig.

Nearest food/drink Mhor 84 Motel, Kingshouse, FK19 8NY, 01877 384646, mhor.net.

Nearest accommodation Rosebank House, Strathyre, FK18 8NA, 01877 384208, rosebankhouse.co.uk.

Other times of year Autumn for warm colours in the hillside grasses and bracken.

Ordnance Survey map Explorer 365

Nearby locations Loch Voil (4 miles); Loch Tay (12 miles).



© Paul Holloway





IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Nadir Khan

Essex-based British mountaineer Nadir Khan is passionate about photographing the adventure sports environment, and in doing so has created a look all of his own. Nick Smith talks to him about his work and how he achieves his dramatic images

above 'Early start on Pinnacle Ridge', Lake District.

NICK SMITH What came first, the adventure or the photography?

NADIR KHAN They evolved at the same time. I had a plastic camera from the age of nine, and when I started hill walking at around 16 I had my mum's old camera. When I went to university I took my dad's old Canon FP, which he'd bought in 1964, the year I was born. The camera lasted about two weeks because I ended up having a climbing accident with the camera strapped around my neck.

NS So are you a full-time pro these days?

NK Not full-time. I work for three days

of the week as a self-employed oral surgeon. The rest of my time is spent photographing and filmmaking. I left behind the hospital side of my job about four years ago, as there just wasn't enough time to do everything. But you have to remember that you can do a lot photographically in four days. I find that balance works well at the moment.

NS You do both commercial and creative projects. How do they work together?

NK I'd like to think that people get me in to do commercial shoots because they like the look of the work I produce

in the creative space. I don't think the results are that different, to be honest, apart from the fact that you might be in a situation where you have to get a few logos in the shot and you need to make sure the branding is clearly visible. Clients want their kit to look good in the adventure sports environment, and that's where I work anyway. I don't think I think differently just because it is a commercial job or I'm just out with my pals.

NS Your photographs have a very distinctive look...

NK There aren't that many people, in

Britain at least, producing work that looks like this. I like to try to bring a lot of different elements into a photo, but one of the keys is off-camera lighting. When you combine landscape, drama and adventure with portrait-style lighting, you can end up with the sort of work I do. Someone asked me the other day how it is possible to make hill walking sexy, and I thought, well, there are a million ways you can do that. Shoot after a storm, before a storm – you can really make it look stunning.

NS So is it the adventure that stimulates your compositions?

NK Any adventure in the mountains: climbing, running, biking, skiing, snowboarding. But the reason for this is that these are my passions. These are the things that originally drew me into the mountains. Photography is the method by which I am able to share these things.

I've done pure landscape and interiors, but if left to my own devices that's not really what I would gravitate towards.

NS You've witnessed the changeover from film to digital. Do you have any views on that?

NK I think that in some cases digital technology has generated and encouraged mediocrity. I hate mediocrity – I detest and despise it. You see, the thing about a photograph is that it's got to connect with you on an emotional level, make you look at it and say, 'wow, I wish I was there.' But now everyone's got a phone or a digital camera on them and there is a lot of garbage out there. But the people who are any good will rise above that.

NS So how do you define the core of what makes good photography?

NK Well, photography all comes down to

NADIR'S TOP TIPS

» **One thing I never go on a shoot without is...** spare batteries, especially in the mountains. You can overcome most adversities... but if you lose power, you're dead.

» **My one piece of advice would be to...** believe in what you do. If what you are doing is new and unknown then it is an uphill struggle. So you have to believe in yourself.

» **Something I try to avoid is...** cliché. You have to create your own vision, drama and look. By all means look at what other people are doing – then do something different and better.

the eye and the brain and how the two connect with your emotions. You then use your technical skills with the machinery available to you to communicate that. That is where the magic happens. The tools you use are just that. Tools.

below 'King Kong Rjukan', Norway.



NADIR'S CRITICAL MOMENTS

To see more of Nadir's work visit nadirkhan.co.uk

1968 Saw my first mountain and thought, 'I must climb that'.

1983 Got my first SLR and smashed it in a climbing accident.

2011 Freed up time to start shooting professionally.

2012 Started shooting for various outdoor companies.

2013 Image highly commended in LPOTY competition.

2014 *The Forge* film screened at Kendal and as part of the Kendal world tour.

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SONY WORLD PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS 2015

Following a record number of entries from 171 countries, this leading competition, which sets out to find the best contemporary photography in a wide range of genres, has again produced some extraordinary outdoor images. Here's our pick from the shortlisted and National Award photographs





previous spread **Open Travel – Shortlist**
Vladimir Proshin (Russia)

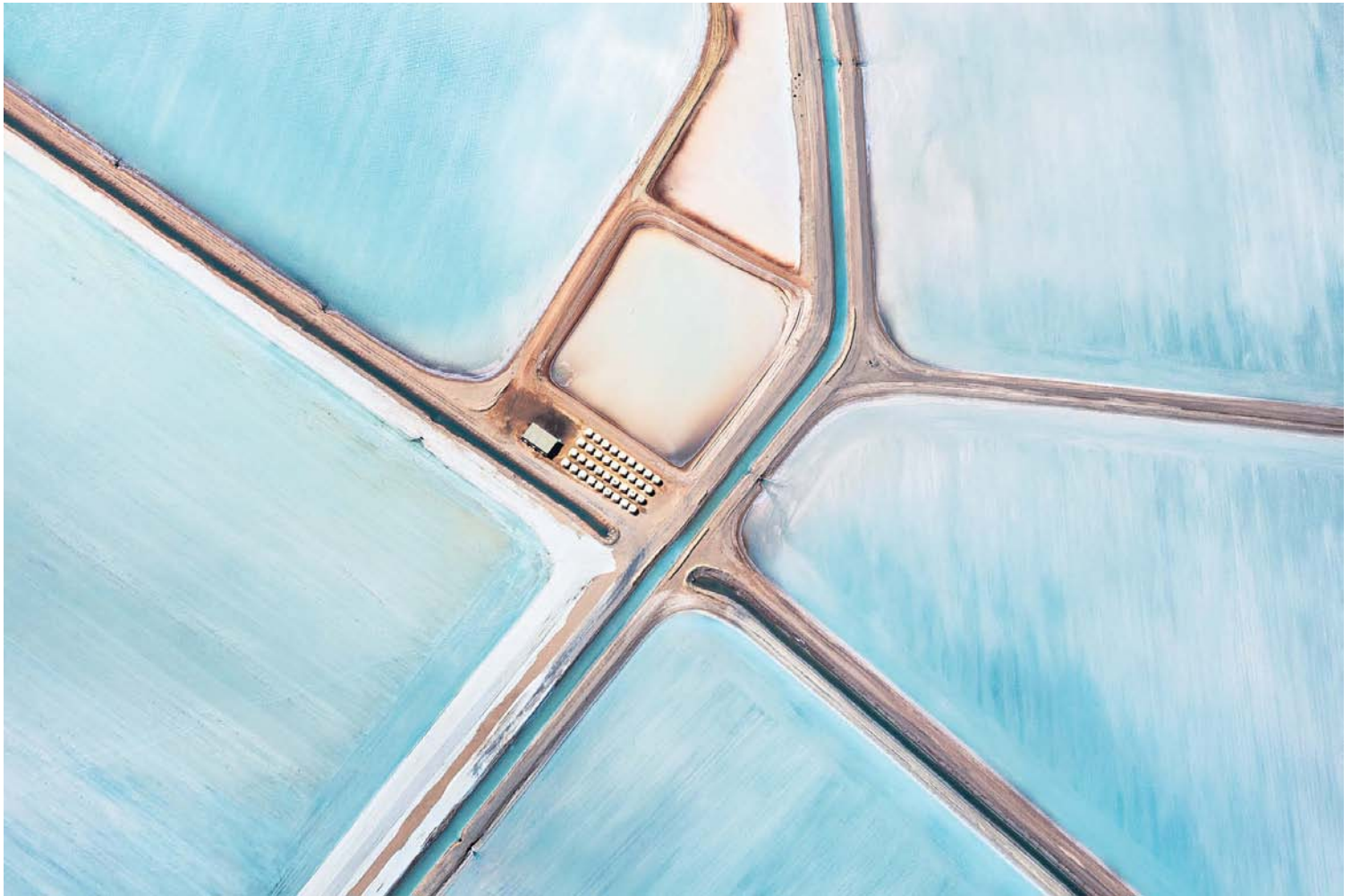
Chinese fishermen demonstrate their skills.



Open Panoramic – Shortlist

Marcio Cabral (Brazil)

The paepalanthus is a rare wildflower found only in parts of Brazil's cerrado vegetation (or savannah) regions. I 'painted' the wildflowers with light in the foreground, and waited for the best time to capture the arc of the Milky Way.



Professional Landscape – Shortlist

Simon Butterworth (UK)

This image was shot from a light aircraft flying at between 4,000 and 5,000ft. The height was crucial as it allowed me to flatten perspective by using a long focal length lens. The time of day and cloud cover were also important, with the abstract effect being heightened by a complete lack of signifying shadow. It was shot at the Useless Loop solar salt operation in Shark Bay, the westernmost point of mainland Australia. The series is part of a larger, long-term project, 'Aesthetics of the Unexpected', which explores the relationships between perception, expectation and reality.

Professional Landscape – Shortlist

Danila Tkachenko (Russia)

My project, Restricted Area, is about the utopian striving of humans for technological progress. I travel in search of places that used to have great importance for this type of progress but are now deserted, places that lost their significance together with the utopian ideology that is now obsolete. There are secret cities that cannot be found on maps, forgotten scientific triumphs, and abandoned buildings of almost inhuman complexity. They represent the perfect technological future that never came.



To see more images from the competition and to find out who the overall winners are go to worldphoto.org

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Thinking space...

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Nov: 16-22, 2015

IDEAS AND IMAGES | ANDREW NADOLSKI & EDDIE EPHRAUMS

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Nov: 23-29, 2015

PHOTOBOOK MAKING | MALCOLM RAGGETT & EDDIE EPHRAUMS

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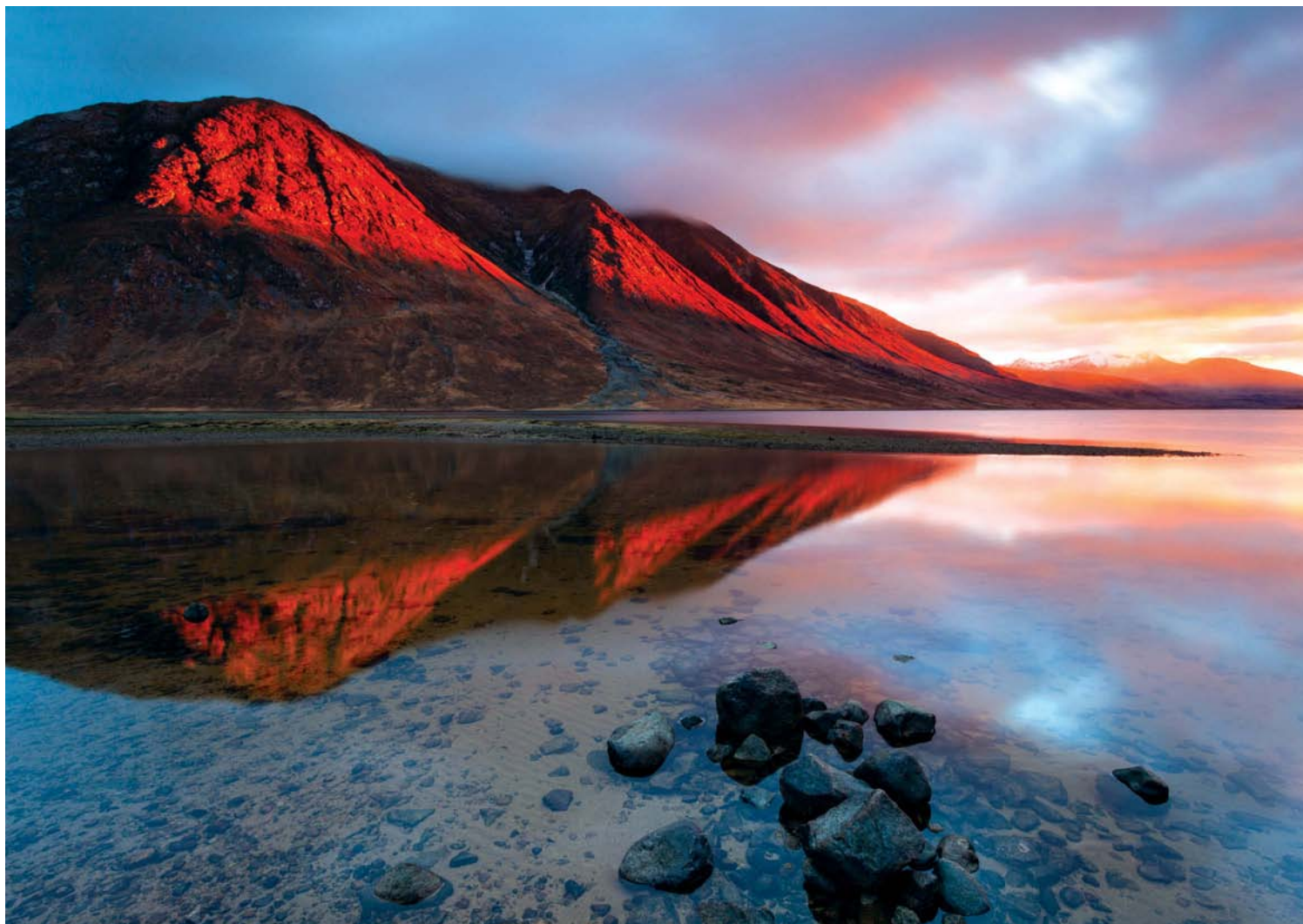


To find out more about our approach to photography, visit:

www.openstudioworkshops.com

READER GALLERY

Each month, we publish the very best images from all those submitted for our reader gallery. Turn to page 84 to find out how to submit your photos. This month's winner is...



Paul Holloway

I got into photography 20 years ago, when my boss asked me to take some publicity images. My workplace being in the Scottish Highlands, I focused on the landscapes, and soon realised that landscape photography was for me.

I live in Callander, at the gateway to the Scottish Highlands and a wealth of photo opportunities. I find being outdoors deeply nourishing, and the hours I spend waiting for the light helps me to reconnect with nature, whatever the photographic results. One of the qualities I aspire to most in photography is to create a feeling of harmony and balance in my images. When everything comes together, and often it's just for seconds, it's one of the most rewarding experiences I know – just being out there and making the image.

A few years ago I went part time with my work to allow more time for photography. I have exhibited my images at the Glasgow Botanic Gardens and regularly exhibit at the Gallery Café in Ullapool.

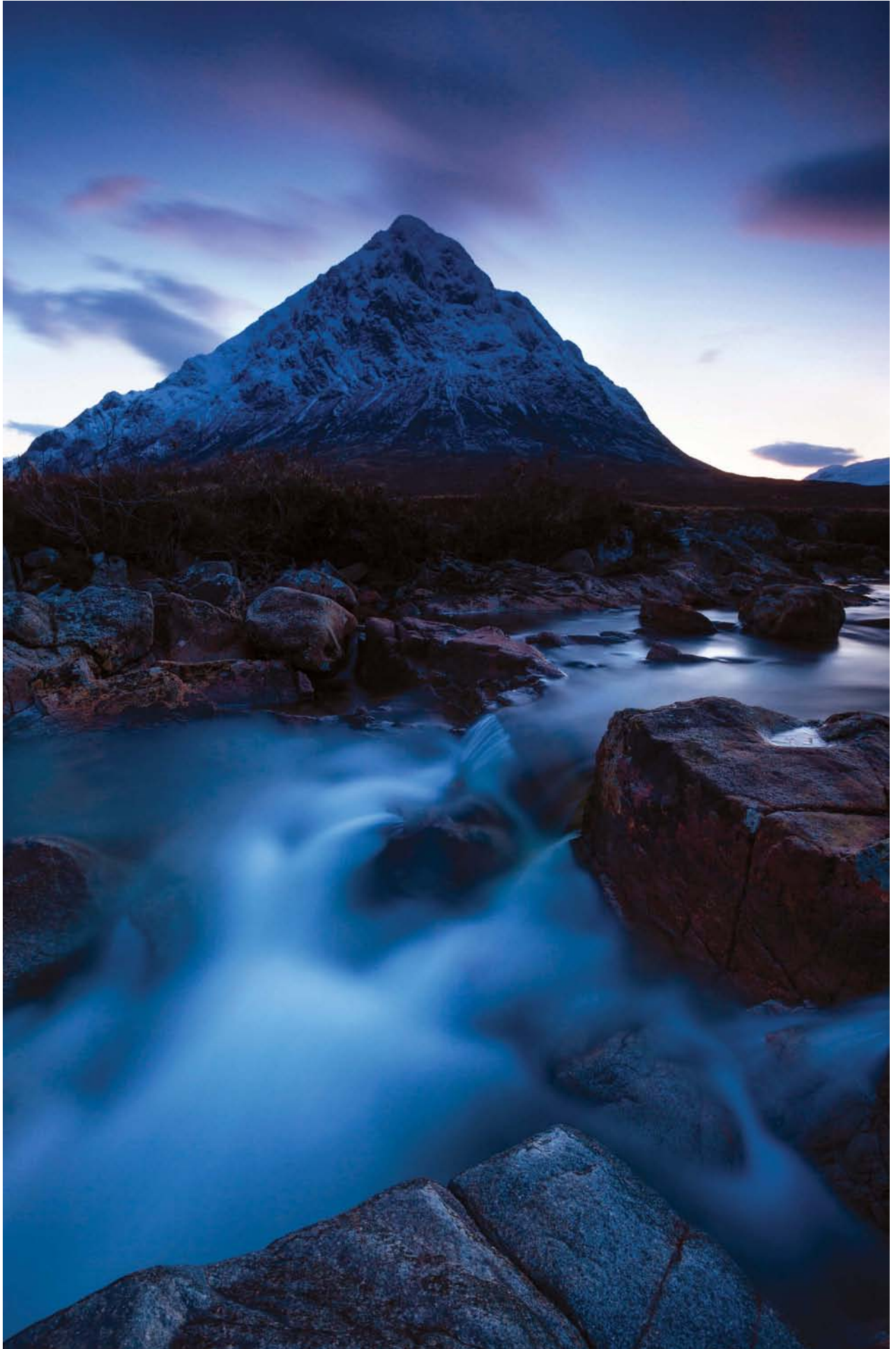


Hometown Callander
Occupation Teacher
Photographic experience
20 years

paulhollowayphotography.co.uk

above Ben Starav from Loch Etive, Argyll and Bute. I attached an ND filter to lengthen the exposure time, smoothing out the water and bringing out the reflections.

Canon EOS 5D MkII with 17-40mm f/4 lens at 17mm, ISO 100, 15sec at f/16, 3-stop ND grad, 2-stop ND grad





WHY WE LOVE THEM...

Paul Holloway's work will be familiar to regular readers of the *OP* Viewpoints section, and so it's a great pleasure to be able to showcase his talent in a greater way this month. Living on the edge of the Scottish Highlands allows him superb access to some of the most photogenic locations in the country, but it also means he has to work harder to conjure up fresh images from these much-photographed scenes. He achieves this through his depth of knowledge about photography and the locations and the sheer amount of time and effort he puts in to being out there honing his craft. Each of the superb images here shows a deft touch with both composition and use of natural light, and go beyond literal representations of place.

left Stob Dearg from the river Coupall, Highland. The light was very low when I made this image, with only a hint of colour left in the clouds. I loved the cool tones of twilight and the soft, silvery glow of the foreground rock echoing the mountain.

Canon EOS 5D MkII with 16-35mm f/2.8 lens at 16mm, ISO 100, 30sec at f/11, 3-stop ND grad

above Looking across Loch Scavaig to the Cuillin mountains, Skye. The polariser helped to remove the glare from the water and revealed the textures and colours of the rocks underneath.

Canon EOS 5D with 17-40mm f/4 lens at 17mm, ISO 100, 2sec at f/22, 2-stop ND grad, polariser

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A photographer's guide to life on Earth

Have you ever looked at a photograph and wondered, how on earth did the photographer see that? In the third part of his series, Chris Weston explains why creativity is a state of mind

PART 2 Quantum creativity: what you see is what you get



I've just returned from a holiday in Hawaii. One evening during the trip I was walking with my partner Monique in Lahaina, a small, bustling town on the west coast of Maui. As we wandered between the myriad restaurants and souvenir shops that lined the picturesque streets we came across several photography galleries, all of which had one thing in common – the photographs on display. They were all the same, as if the photographers had gone out as a group – same time, same place and with the same mind –

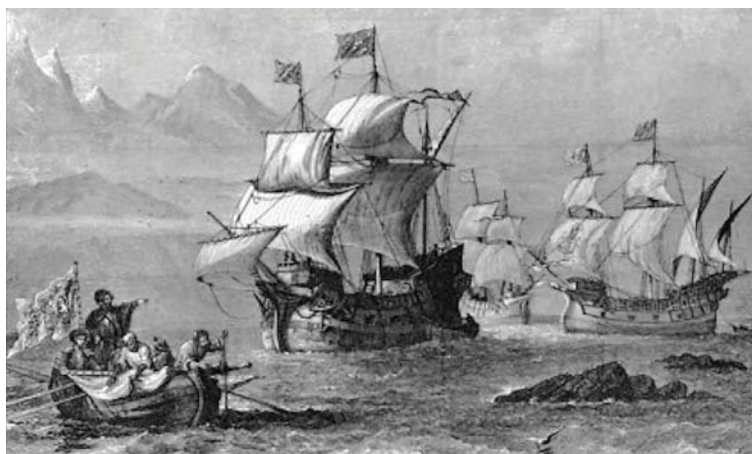
resulting in the production of near identical images.

This got me thinking about the mind and creativity and reminded me of the question I had posed some months ago on my journey home to Switzerland from the Camargue (featured in the previous part in this series, in OP191): 'What does quantum physics reveal about our individual creativity?' So, this month, rather than write about interconnectedness, as I'd planned, I decided to answer my own question.

above The Waterfront in Lahaina on the Hawaiian island of Maui, the inspiration for this article.

LEARNING TO VISUALISE

When you imagine your visualisation, use all your senses. For example, feel the wind as it touches your skin, hear the birdsong, smell the scent of flowers and taste the moisture in the air. Feel the warmth of the sun or envision the gathering storm – whatever the scene you want to create. Then ask yourself, 'How would I feel if this came true?' Most likely, your body will respond with good feelings. This is the important bit because your mind cannot distinguish between imagination and reality and it will do all it can to materialise your visualisation. And remember, visualisation is a skill and, like all skills, it takes practice to perfect.



far left Ferdinand Magellan, the legendary Portuguese explorer.

left It is historically documented that the three fully rigged sailing ships, anchored off the coast of Tierra del Fuego, were 'invisible' to the native South Americans.

We cannot perceive what we cannot conceive

In 1520, the legendary Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan led the remnants of his expeditionary fleet across the Pacific Ocean, eventually reaching the archipelago of Tierra del Fuego, at the tip of South America.

On coming ashore, he was greeted by a group of natives, who had come to investigate these strange new beings, and to wonder at how they'd arrived. It's historically documented that when Magellan pointed out the three fully rigged sailing ships anchored off the coast, none of the natives could see them – literally.

The ships' alleged invisibility is thought by some to be due to the natives having never conceived such otherworldly contraptions, which meant they had no reference for them in their brains, hence they could not perceive them through their

eyes. The inference is: we can only perceive what our minds are capable of conceiving. In a modern world in which we are bombarded with information (according to Eric Schmidt, CEO of Google, every two days we create as much information as we managed between the dawn of civilisation and 2003) it is hard to imagine anything being inconceivable.

But back then (as the celebrated historian Yuval Noah Harari¹ expresses in his authoritative book *Sapiens: A brief history of humankind*), to a native South American who truly believed that the whole world consisted only of their known land, the coming of these Portuguese sailors, with their white skin, facial hair and rank odour, was the equivalent of an alien invasion from outer space. This was long before Hollywood had informed us of what an alien might look like.

Training the mind

What is the relevance of this look back on history, and what does it have to do with photography?

Firstly (although I hadn't anticipated this) it underlines and supports my theory of back-to-front composition. Another word for 'conceive' is 'visualise'. As I described in the first part of this series (OP190), by visualising a photograph you want to create it becomes far more likely that you'll see that image when out in the field with your camera. This is because your visualisation creates a reference point in your mind that allows you to perceive the image in reality.

On a deeper level, it suggests that the more we are able to conceive, the more likely it is that the images we create are our own unique interpretation of reality rather than simply another record of what is plain for all to see. Observing the photographs on the walls of the galleries in Lahaina, the unavoidable conclusion was the absence of creativity. So, if creativity is born from conception, how do we train ourselves to conceive more?

The good news is that you already have the answer inside your head, literally. In the foreword



of Professor Lothar Schäfer's² book, *Infinite Potential* it explains, 'If you see a sunset and think it beautiful, nothing in physics or biology can explain why. What's astonishing – and a complete mystery – is how we see a sunset as a picture in reality, for there is no light in the brain, no images of a sunset. The brain isn't a camera, not remotely. Everything you see, hear, touch, taste and smell must be created by the mind.' If this is the case, training the mind is the answer to learning how to visualise – whether it's applied to photography or life in general.

above Look at the image on the right and consider what you see – the silhouette of a leaf, a scythe? This was my reality conjured from a creative mind that enabled me to see beyond the public building (left) that most people passed by.

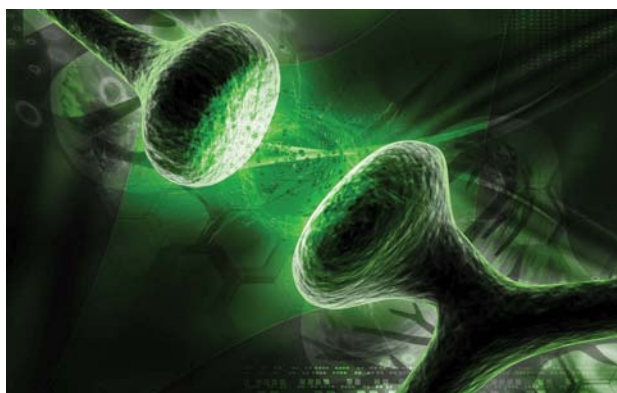
The (quantum) mechanics of your mind

Whenever our senses are stimulated it causes an electrical impulse to be sent to the brain. These impulses are transported via nerve cells or neurons along fibers (called axons), which branch out from the neuron. Each axon is separated from the next nerve cell's receiver by a microscopic gap called the synapse.

In order to communicate effectively and turn data into information, the original impulses sent by the senses must cross these gaps and to do that they need a pathway. Recent research³ suggests that as well as conventional chemical and electrical pathways there are also a multitude of quantum effects at work, forging new neural connections. It is these quantum connections that lead us to interpret the world the way we do, in our own unique and conscious way.

Far from being fixed, these quantum connections can be broken and created anew. This is how we learn, and by exposing our brain to more and varied stimuli – the more we challenge our brains – the more connections we make in the sea of neural matter that translate waves of thought into a meaningful understanding of our world.

Neurologists call this 'use-dependent plasticity' and it is this plasticity that enables us to expand and enrich how we



left Quantum mechanics is constantly at work in our brains, helping us to learn and experience life in our own unique way.

below It is the plasticity of the brain that enables some people to see what others may miss.

experience our environment and interpret it in evocative and far-reaching ways. In other words, plasticity enables us to see what others cannot.

The capacity to flex the mind in whatever direction is necessary to find resolve is what leads to true creative thinking. Creativity is not just coming up with something new or different, but with something that is coherent, useful and relevant to whatever stimulated the need for a creative thought.



THE SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY CREATIVE PEOPLE

What's the difference between imagination and creativity? How do you turn an idea into something tangible? To find the answers to these questions, download my guide to the seven habits of highly creative people at chrisweston.photography/creativity.

The power of creative thought

Does visualisation actually work? Phil Jackson is the Sir Alex Ferguson of American basketball. One of the most successful coaches in NBA history, he is a great believer in visualisation as a tool for success. In his own life, from the age of 10, he imagined being successful, first as a basketball player and then, after an accident prevented him from following a professional career, as a coach.

And as a coach, he helped his players visualise their individual successes – drawing pictures of plays and moves that enabled them to execute on court the perfect block or pass as it had been designated in the dressing room. In nine years with the Chicago Bulls, his teams won six titles. With the LA Lakers it was three titles in five years.

Many hugely successful sportsmen and women admit to using visualisation as part of their preparation. Jack Nicklaus, Mary Lou Retton (an Olympic gold medalist and one of America's greatest ever gymnasts) and Usain Bolt are three examples that immediately spring to mind. There are many more.

And I use it – in photography. Earlier this year I was in India

photographing the wildlife in Satpura National Park. One morning, as I climbed into the jeep, the young naturalist said to me that he didn't think we'd see tigers that day. I stopped him in his verbal tracks: 'Think you won't, and you won't', I joked. 'We need to put out positive energy.'

A short while later, we'd stopped to observe a leopard that was on a kill, way off in the distance, barely visible hidden in some thick bushes. I turned to the naturalist and asked him if he'd like a demonstration of the power of creative thought. I visualised the scenario I wanted to happen and then described it: 'The leopard will come out from the bushes, over there on the right', I said. 'He will walk down the left side of that fallen tree, walk across the grass in front of us, stopping to pose a moment by that small grey rock in the middle. He'll then continue up the slope – not down – on to the ledge by that slender tree and then make his way down to the small pool of water – not the larger one – and take a drink.'

About 20 minutes later, much to the wonder of the young naturalist, the leopard did exactly as I had described.

below Observing this Asian leopard in Satpura National Park in India, I visualised the scene I wanted to create, describing it to my naturalist guide. About 20 minutes later, much to his surprise, the leopard did exactly what I had imagined.



Life imitating art

Creativity enables us to make the photographs we want and to reveal a world unique to us. It is how we make images that are different and meaningful. Without it, like the images on the walls of the galleries in Lahaina, our images turn out the same.

Stimulating the brain, forging more and new neuronal connections, opens the way for a way of seeing that helps us to craft images that are at once evocative, thought-provoking and inspiring – images that are a reflection of the wave patterns constantly at work in our brains and determining who we are at a quantum level in any given moment. Surely, as artists, this should be our aim.

As it is in photography, so it is in life. As you conceive more, so your every experience – from taking a shower in the morning,

to the daily commute, to interactions with the people around you – is enriched.

I started this article with a question of my own and I'm going to end it with one for you. The next time you go out with your camera, are you going to choose what you know and what is ordinary or are you going to explore new possibilities? In other words, are you going to live in the conditioned but comfortable cocoon of your subconscious or are you prepared to take a few risks, aspire for the new and explore the infinite potential of reality?

In next month's chapter of A photographer's guide to life on Earth, Chris Weston explores the art of mindfulness and the mindfulness of art – probably.

¹ Yuval Noah Harari has a PhD in history from Oxford University and is a winner of the annual Polonsky Prize for Creativity and Originality.

² Lothar Schäfer is a distinguished professor of physical chemistry (emeritus) at the University of Arkansas, USA.

³ Based on a publication by Piero Scaruffi who has conducted extensive research on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Cognitive Science during his career in IT and as a Harvard University scholar. His work aims to bridge AI, mathematics, science and art.

With thanks to Simon Weir for assisting in the research of parts of this article.



SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

*This annual competition looks to highlight the beauty and diversity
of the UK's newest national park. The theme for this one was
Hidden Gems, and it produced a set of emotive images*







Winner (*opening spread*)

Andy Flowerday

I had been past this dew pond (which lies between Ditchling Beacon and the Jack and Jill windmills) on several occasions and thought there could be potential for a nice image of it. The sunset wasn't going to give the glorious colours I had hoped for, but the increasing cloud cover led to some lovely soft shades of colour. I used a neutral density filter to blur the movement of the water and clouds. It was a very still August evening – I used a four-minute exposure and the tree didn't move at all during that time.

2nd place (*opposite*)

Neil Hulme

I took this image in early October in Eartham Woods. As I re-entered the wooded section of Roman road I stopped to marvel at the patterns made as sunlight cascaded down through the beech trees. The cyclist suddenly appeared from the right and dismounted, to take a well-earned rest on the bench I have sat upon so many times myself. He didn't see me, so I managed to surreptitiously capture his own moment of quiet contemplation.

3rd place (*above*)

Ivan Talboys

The previous night's weather forecast had suggested a brief respite from the storms that had battered the south coast all winter. I initially went down to Tidemills, near Newhaven, to capture the sun rising by Seaford Head but was greeted by glorious pink clouds. It seems I wasn't the only one interested, as about half a dozen surfers turned up to catch some morning waves.

ENTER THE NEXT COMPETITION!

The theme for the 2015-16 South Downs National Park photography competition is *Fresh Perspectives*. They are looking for photographers to show them the national park from a new angle. First prize is £250, second prize is £150 and third prize is £50. And to highlight the park's campaign to become an International Dark Skies Reserve, there is a special prize of £100 for the best photo of the South Downs at night. *Find out more and download an entry form at southdowns.gov.uk/photo2015*

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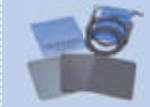
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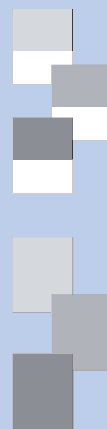
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40.5mm	37-58	77mm	58-105
43mm	37-72	82mm	72-105
43.5mm	46-58	86mm	72-105
46mm	37-62	93mm	82
48mm	46-58	95mm	82-105
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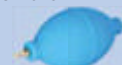
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"If you're hesitant about investing in filters, SRB is a good place to start. An Excellent choice." Amateur Photographer May 2014

NATURE ZONE

DISCOVER

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On the wing**



BRAVE NEW WORLD

Laurie Campbell has tips on how to photograph young animals

Life in the Wild

Many of us enjoy sharing our wildlife sightings, but in disclosing our locations, do we risk putting vulnerable species in danger? Laurie Campbell considers the issue and explains why we should always put our subjects' welfare first

Try typing the words 'otter' and 'Thetford' into Google, and be prepared to see images and video footage of possibly the most photographed wild otters in the UK. Regular readers of this magazine may be aware that at about this time last year I had a book of my own photographs of otters published. The difference was that, together with my co-writer friend Anna Levin, I set out to tell the story of the return of otters to the Tweed river system and a landscape I've known all my life.

Early in 2013, during the closing stages of obtaining photographs for the book, I became aware of the presence of otters on the Little Ouse river, which runs through the middle of Thetford – amazingly, they were featured on the BBC's *The One Show*. I toyed with the idea of making the long journey south to Norfolk, but resisted the temptation, deciding instead to restrict myself to only photographing otters that were relevant to the story Anna and I wanted to tell.

I remember at the time speaking to the picture editor of a wildlife magazine, thinking that they must be inundated with photographs of the Thetford otters. They were, and declared that the situation had 'all gone a bit Donna Nook.' On the off chance that there is anyone reading this who isn't aware, Donna Nook, on the Lincolnshire coast, has a large breeding colony of grey seals and is an incredibly popular site with photographers. Unfortunately this has resulted in evidence that pressures from visiting photographers may be having an adverse effect on the seals' breeding success. This has been known for some time, and I know that *OP* responded by stating that it would not publish

right This otter cub approached so closely that it became awkward to use my 500mm lens tripod-mounted. I really wasn't prepared for this, and didn't have a shorter telephoto close to hand, so I was forced to handhold my longer lens.

Nikon D4 with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens, ISO 1250, 640sec at f/4, handheld





images of grey seals taken at the site.

I'm not implying that there are such problems for the Thetford otters, and I think it's brilliant that so many more people have the opportunity to see and photograph these captivating mammals, but I can't help wondering what the outcome might be if a breeding holt with young cubs is discovered.

Recently I was toying with the idea of leading guided walks to look for otters at some of the sites I had worked extensively to obtain the photographs for my book, and by chance I received an enquiry from someone I knew requesting information about these locations. Within the space of a couple of weeks, we were on the riverbank together, enjoying an amazing encounter with a female otter and two young cubs, having already had good sightings of two other otters that same morning on the same river,

less than a mile downstream.

Although sharing such an experience was incredibly satisfying, I am now in two minds about whether guiding people to such sites is a service that I would like to provide to anyone. On one hand, giving instruction on reading field signs and using fieldcraft to find and get close to otters is something that just about anyone could learn and then apply at their local waterways – otters are, after all, popping up nationwide. On the other hand, though, past experience has taught me that many animals like to return to the same sites. Once such information appears on the web, the welfare of an animal can be put in danger – in the case of the otters on the Tweed, mammals with dependant young, which are protected from disturbance by laws that are as robust as those that protect the likes of nesting golden eagles.

above This image was shot as part of a commission to illustrate a book about golden eagles. I needed a licence to allow me to photograph the birds close to and, on this occasion, from inside the eyrie. I had thought about zooming the lens back to 17mm to include more of the background, but decided not to, in order to preserve the anonymity of the site. *Nikon F5 with Nikon 17-35mm f/2.8 AFS lens at 35mm, Provia ISO 100, 1/250sec at f/8, handheld*

left This is one of two young otters, and although they were able to catch small fish by themselves, they were still dependant on their mother. As such, they are vulnerable and therefore protected by law. *Nikon D4 with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens, ISO 1000, 1000sec at f/4.5, handheld*



LAURIE'S FACTFILE

To share or not to share...

» It can be extremely frustrating having to decide whether or not to share information about sites at which it is possible to obtain consistently close views of wildlife. It's usually the case that there is always some location where it is a little easier to photograph just about any subject – this may be because the animals have become semi-habituated to humans, as with the Thetford otters, or because a favourite feeding site has been located. Whatever the situation may be, a photographer who has discovered a reliable site may have spent a fair amount of time and effort doing so, and could argue that they might have some say in who they tell – I am aware of how contentious this may sound.

» Many people (including myself) become involved in wildlife photography because of the enjoyment to be had from simply showing wildlife to others. When it comes to deciding whether or not to disclose our sites, the crucial thing is to think ahead of the possible consequences of sites becoming well known. The paramount consideration must be for the animals themselves. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act it is illegal, without an official licence, to approach certain subjects, such as rare birds with dependant young during the breeding season, or protected mammals at their place of shelter. There are also other aspects to consider, such as the damage caused to the habitat itself from excessive trampling and traffic.

» In considering this issue, I am reminded of a quote by an acquaintance, Roy Dennis, director of the Highland Foundation for Wildlife, who said, 'perhaps we have reached the stage where we need places where people simply can't go.' His comment came after rights of way groups prevented a landowner from fencing off a huge tract of land around his estate so that once-native carnivores could be reintroduced.

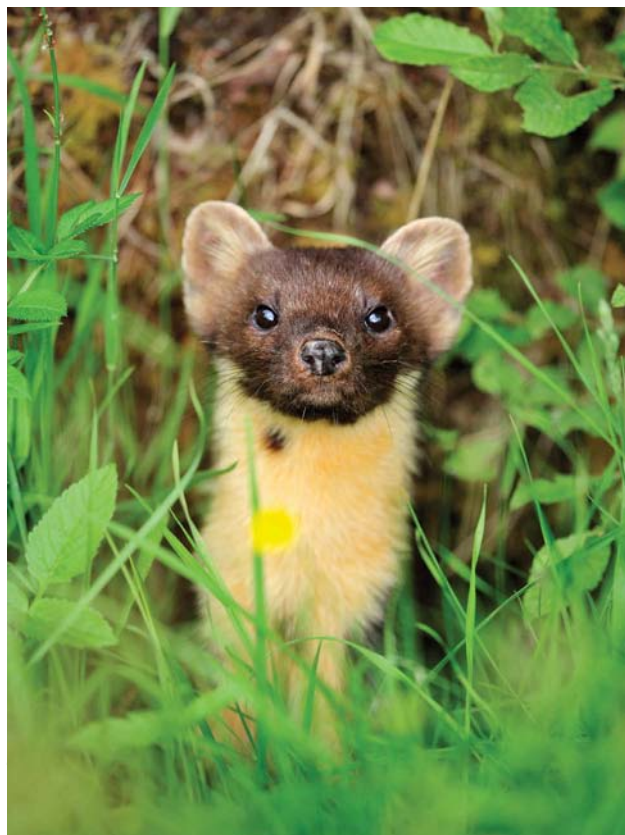
What to shoot this month...

Laurie's June highlights



▲ Sometimes it's difficult to resist the temptation to photograph young animals, and in the context of compiling sequences showing whole life cycles, for a book project for example, then it's unavoidable. The solution is to always have the welfare of the subject in mind and to minimise any disturbance by working quickly. Try using a handheld camera and a close-focusing zoom or macro lens, preferably with image stabilisation. Rather than try for images that are sharp all over, use wide apertures and selective focusing centred on the eyes, leaving foreground and backgrounds heavily out of focus.

Nikon D4 with Voigtlander APO-Lanthar 125mm f/2.5 macro lens, ISO 500, 1/125sec at f/4, beanbag



▲ Apart from their distinctive white rump, **roe deer** (*Capreolus capreolus*) can be tricky to spot between late autumn and spring, when they are in their darker brown winter coats. All this changes at this time of year, because the deer are now sporting sleeker, redder, summer coats, which contrast dramatically with the luxuriant greens of the season. The movements of the bucks (males) are now a little more predictable, too, because soon they will be holding territories in preparation for July's rutting season. *Nikon D3 with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens, ISO 250, 1/200sec at f/5.6, tripod*

◀ With growing kits to feed, and in the month with the longest hours of daylight, this is the best time of year to have a chance of photographing **pine martens** (*Martes martes*) in daylight and without having to resort to using electronic flash. Lots of companies and holiday cottages around the Scottish Highlands now feed pine martens for the enjoyment of visitors, but many of these sites receive no direct sunlight. To get round this, if you have the option, photograph them beneath cloudy skies to avoid problems with colour balance and strong blue colour casts.

Nikon D3 with Nikon 500mm f/4 VR lens, ISO 1250, 1/400sec at f/4, handheld

▲ June is the peak month for **red deer** (*Cervus elaphus*) giving birth, but, in the Highlands this is also the time of year when then the deer are largely present higher in the hills, in order to avoid the worst of the biting insects. For the first few days of life, calves are left hidden in vegetation by their mothers, who only return to feed them every few hours. The calves' coats are heavily spotted for added camouflage, which also makes them more photogenic. Never be tempted to touch or stay too long because of the risk of abandonment by their mothers.

Nikon F5 with manual focus Nikon 800mm f/5.6 lens, Fuji Provia ISO 100, 1/250sec at f/5.6, beanbag

MORE SEASONAL SUBJECTS...

Flora

Cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*) – a stunning blue flower which, although classed as an arable weed, is now much less common in the cornfields after which it is named and where it was once abundant.

Stinking iris (*Iris foetidissima*) – native and fairly common in southern Britain, and introduced elsewhere, probably because of its attractive purple-magenta flowers.

Monkey flower (*Mimulus guttatus*) – a non-native species from northern America, found by our waterways in two forms, with brilliant yellow or orange flowers.

Fauna

Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) – thought to have been introduced into the UK by the Romans, rabbits are the perfect mammals on which to practise fieldcraft skills.

Puffin (*Fratercula arctica*) – peak time of year to photograph these birds with beaks full of sandeels to take to their young, which are still in nesting burrows.

WORLD WILDLIFE SPECTACLES



© Cam Gillespie/Eagle-Eye Tours

Narwhals, Baffin Island

Lying between Greenland and the Canadian mainland, Baffin Island is an incredible Arctic wilderness. In June, the sea ice retreats, and marine mammals, including several species of seal, travel north along the ice floe edge in search of food. Spiral-tusked narwhals can often be seen close to the shore, usually travelling in pods of two or more. Northern birds such as black-legged kittiwake, thick-billed murre and king and common eider can be seen in abundance. eagle-eye.com/Baffin_Floe

African wildlife, Tanzania

Tanzania's dry season, from June to October, is the peak time to see the country's incredible wildlife – from lions, leopards and cheetahs to giraffes, hippos and elephants. Selous Game Reserve in southern Tanzania covers over 20,000 square miles and is one of the wildest places on Earth. The river Rufiji splits the reserve into two sections: the northern Selous is dedicated to

photographic safaris, while the much larger southern Selous, is managed as a hunting reserve. whc.unesco.org/en/list/199



© Jo Creabin / Shutterstock.com

10 INSPIRING SUMMER NATURE EXPERIENCES

From nesting seabirds to wildflower meadows in full bloom, here are some of the best seasonal locations and walks to ignite your imagination this summer...



© National Trust Images/Pete Hoddinott

1 Pentire headland walk, Cornwall

In summer the exposed Pentire headland is ablaze with poppies and marigolds, which can be enjoyed via a 3.4-mile coastal walk south of Newquay. Also look out for grey seals, greater horseshoe bats, peregrine falcons, corn buntings and lapwings.

nationaltrust.org.uk/polzeath-to-port-quin

2 White Cliffs of Dover, Kent

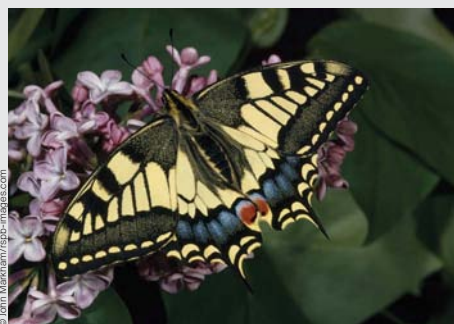
Enjoy a four-mile wildlife walk along the White Cliffs of Dover, an area well known for its wildflowers and butterflies, especially small, Adonis and chalkhill blues. Listen out for kittiwakes, skylarks and meadow pipits.

nationaltrust.org.uk/white-cliffs-dover

3 Thursley Common, Surrey

Located close to Guildford, this marshy reserve has an abundance of insects and is therefore rich in birds and reptiles. Common lizards, sand lizards, grass snakes, smooth snakes and adders can be found on the heath, along with over 25 species of dragonfly.

naturalengland.org.uk



© John Mardham/Reptile Images.com

4 Strumpshaw Fen, Norfolk

Visit on a warm, sunny day for the best chance of seeing an array of dragonflies and butterflies, including the rare swallowtail. You can also enjoy displays of wildflowers in the orchid-rich meadows, watch marsh harriers swooping over the reed beds and look for lesser spotted woodpeckers in the woodland.

rspb.org.uk/strumpshawfen

5 Hartslock nature reserve, Oxfordshire

Rising up from the Thames, seven miles from

Reading, this flower-rich chalk grassland is renowned for its orchids, including, in May or early June, the famous monkey orchid.

bbowt.org.uk/reserves/hartslock

6 Rockingham Forest, Northamptonshire

Covering more than 200 square miles and combining ancient woodland, parkland and open grassland, Rockingham Forest is a haven for wildlife. Rarities include hazel dormice and black hairstreak and purple emperor butterflies.

wildlifebcn.org/rockingham-forest



© National Trust Images/Joie Corrihan

7 Murlough NNR, County Down

Located on the edge of Dundrum Bay and the Mourne Mountains, Murlough is Ireland's best and most extensive dune system. Over 600 species of butterflies and moths can be found here, including the endangered marsh fritillary. There's also a good chance of grey and common seal sightings.

nationaltrust.org.uk/murlough

8 Moor House Upper Teesdale NNR, County Durham

Spring/summer is the best time to enjoy the botanical delights and wildlife of this spectacular post-glacial landscape in the heart of the north Pennines. The area is known for its Arctic-alpine plants such as spring gentians, mountain pansies and alpine bistort.

naturalengland.org.uk

9 Cors Dyfi Osprey Project, Powys

Ospreys have been breeding in the Dyfi valley in Machynlleth since 2011, three years after they were reintroduced to the area. They nest between April and late summer and can be viewed from the reserve's new observatory.

dyfiospreyproject.com

10 Mull, Inner Hebrides

Explore the rich waters around the Hebrides by boat for the best chance of seeing basking sharks, harbour porpoises, dolphins and a host of seabirds. Summer-visiting cetaceans include minke whales and, occasionally, orcas. Try local tour company Sea Life Surveys.

sealifesurveys.com

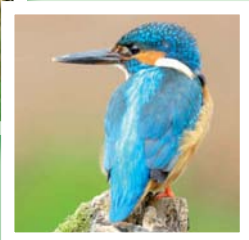
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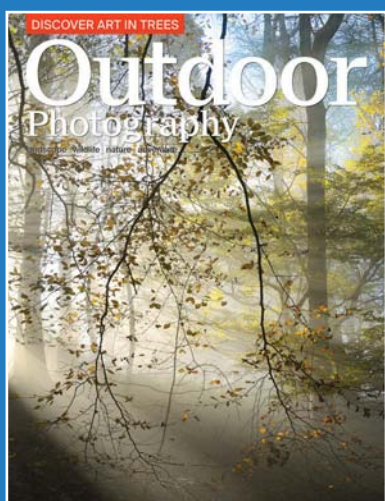
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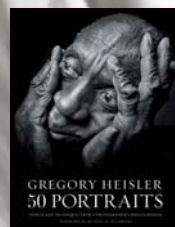


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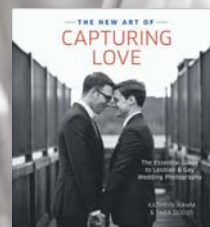


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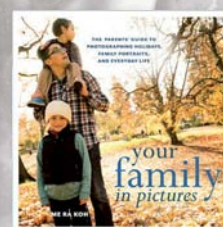
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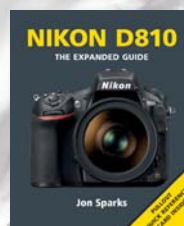
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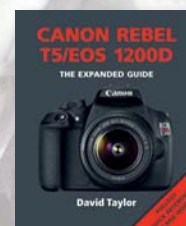
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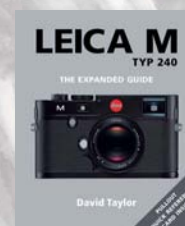
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Into the mist

Keen to capture the drama of the deer rut, Naomi Stollow heads to London's Richmond Park at dawn and is rewarded with atmospheric light and a close-up encounter with a magnificent stag

I live for moments with nature: they keep me going and keep me inspired. Such moments come too infrequently for my liking, as I work full time in order to fund my photography and my passion for overseas travel – the right balance is hard to find. But last autumn, knowing the red deer of Richmond Park would be beginning their rutting season, I set aside a morning to witness the spectacle for myself.

I arranged to meet some friends in the park early one Saturday. At 5am my four alarms went off, along with my daylight lamp. I got dressed and walked to the car in zombie mode, bundled the bags in and set off, hoping for the best.

As I drove into Richmond Park the light changed instantly, filtered by the dense mist and creating a beautiful, inviting scene – it was

almost as if had entered a natural stage set. My heart started to thump as I saw a red stag trot before me, like a ghost in the mist.

I am never good without coffee, but to make the most of the incredible light I just bumped out of the car and fell straight into the park, vaguely following the others, blinking from lack of sleep. Before me, however, was one of the most beautiful scenes I have ever seen.

The light was casting the most incredible patterns through the mist and the branches of the dense, forested parts of the park. The colours changed from the palest of yellows to the most vibrant oranges and reds as the sun rose higher in the sky. The deer were not yet rutting, but I could hear the males issuing warning calls.

It was early October, and the stags were

beginning their toughest season. They must win a harem of females to mate with, and battle many other males for this privilege. It was this arduous challenge that I was trying to portray with my photos that morning. I knew that the males would not stop to eat or sleep for many weeks in their quest to pass on their genes.

To get this shot, I lay quietly in different patches of frost-covered bracken, getting wetter and colder as the morning went on, and I inched slowly towards the deer. Covered in mud and twigs, wearing odd bits of clothing and with leaves in my hair, I looked like a crazy person. Yet lying there with my camera so close to this magnificent creature, I could feel in my bones the incredible effort that he must make in his battle for supremacy.

On the wing

In recent years there has been a marked rise in the number of birds adapting their behaviour to take advantage of our urbanised landscapes – something Steve Young has seen first-hand in his local parks...

It's been some 30 years since I started taking bird photographs, and the hobby has changed completely in that time. Not only has the taking of images changed; the birds themselves have adapted their habits.

Back in the 80s I'd have to travel to a nature reserve with reed beds to attempt to take photos of grey heron; I would need to go to farmland to photograph wood pigeons, and a trip to the woods would be necessary for the chance of even seeing a nuthatch or a great spotted woodpecker. Today I can just pop along the road to my two local parks and photograph all those species; the urbanisation of birds has become more and more noticeable over the years, but seems to have exploded in the last decade or so.

Parks with lakes have always held a selection of the commoner species that you would expect to see, such as mallard, mute swan, black-headed gull, Canada goose and tufted duck. But just recently I photographed a grey heron at close range as it walked alongside a fisherman and caught a fish – I was handholding an 80-400mm lens; not even a mega powerful telephoto was needed. At another park, using the same lens, I can photograph little grebes as they feed near the water's edge. Last year a pair of grey herons even nested successfully there, raising at least one young.

Some species have decided that

people are of no concern, even during the breeding season. Great spotted woodpecker is a traditional woodland nesting bird, but last year a pair chose to nest alongside a well-used tarmac footpath in the park. It was high in the tree, but it was still noticeable from the path. On certain days it drew a small crowd, but the birds just carried on coming and going to feed their young. A pair of nuthatch chose to nest low down in a tree next to the park café and just carried on bringing mouthfuls of insects, seemingly oblivious to the heads they were flying over.

The wood pigeon's behaviour is quite amazing, though. At their farmland sites they can still be difficult to photograph – usually when something is pointed at them it means they are about to be shot. Park populations are exactly the opposite, and they have learned that people with picnics represent a feeding opportunity. During a recent trip to my local park, one wood pigeon was bold enough to take food from the hand of a young lad.

Birds are adept at taking advantage of easy food situations, and with housing expanding rapidly into countryside areas I suppose it is only natural that certain species are becoming more used to buildings and people, and adapting their behaviour accordingly. These changing circumstances offer plenty of challenges and opportunities for any photographer.



above (top) Grey heron at park lakeside: Ignoring cars and people, this grey heron walked the perimeter of the lake searching for food.

above (bottom) Grey heron close-up with fish: The heron's search for food was successful!



Wood pigeon being fed: The parkland population of wood pigeons has become totally urbanised over the years – they now know when and where to expect their food.



Nuthatch at nest hole: Despite the close proximity of the park café, this nuthatch just carried on flying in over the building, and customers sat outside, to feed the young.



Little grebe: Summer-plumaged little grebe with fish, photographed at one of my local park lakes at close range; it never used to be like this 20 years ago.

Steve's June highlights



Bird of the month

It's seabird colony time again, and I should imagine that many *OP* readers will be taking time out this season to photograph our breeding seabirds.

Gannet is one of the more difficult species to photograph; the only mainland colony in England is at RSPB Bempton Cliffs in East Yorkshire, otherwise it is off to far-flung Scottish islands to try your luck – this is a great experience if you have the time.

Gannets take a few years to reach maturity, and birds of many different ages can be seen at colonies. You'll find a variety of brown in their wings, with juvenile birds looking completely different from their parents. They are fantastic birds to photograph, allowing a close approach and giving opportunities for lots of different flight shots. As they glide past, their staring eyes seem to be looking straight at you, but then they turn and dive, entering the water at great speed.



clockwise from top left
Gannet diving: Just before they enter the water, gannets close their wings and dive like a bullet after their prey.

Gannet (adult): Hanging in the wind

without a care in the world, this adult gannet just loves windy conditions.

Gannet (young bird): Note the large amount of brown in the plumage of this young gannet, which is probably in its second year.

LOCATION OF THE MONTH



© Chris Gomersall



© David Tipling

Fetlar, Shetland

One of the most northerly of the Shetland islands, and with around 80 human inhabitants, Fetlar is renowned for its rich and abundant flora and fauna. Known as the garden of Shetland due to its fertile soils, the island has incredible displays of summer wildflowers – over 200 species have been recorded here. But what really brings Fetlar to life at this time of year is the large number of wading birds, including the majority of the UK's breeding red-necked phalaropes. They can be seen at close range in June and July from the RSPB hide at the Mires of Funzie (pronounced 'Finnie'), or as they feed along the shores of the Loch of Funzie.

Other Fetlar birds include whimbrel, red-throated diver, arctic skua, great skua, storm petrel, manx shearwater, ringed plover, golden plover, kittiwake, shag and puffin.

Getting there Car ferries operate daily from Unst and Yell. It is possible to make a day trip to Fetlar, but it's worth spending more time exploring the island – there are various accommodation options, details of which can be found on the website below.

Further information To plan your visit, go to fetlar.org, and to learn about the RSPB's reserve at Fetlar visit rspb.org.uk/fetlar.



BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY TIP



If the weather has been kind, there will soon be a variety of young birds around, waiting to be fed by their parents; species such as blue tit, great tit, blackbird and robin can all be relatively early breeders if conditions are good.

Be ready to try and capture some shots of the young birds at feeding time, just after they have left the nest; listen out for an increase in noise as the young call loudly to be fed – this can draw your attention to what is about to happen. A lot depends on where the young birds sit to be fed, and I've been frustrated many times by branches or leaves getting in the way.



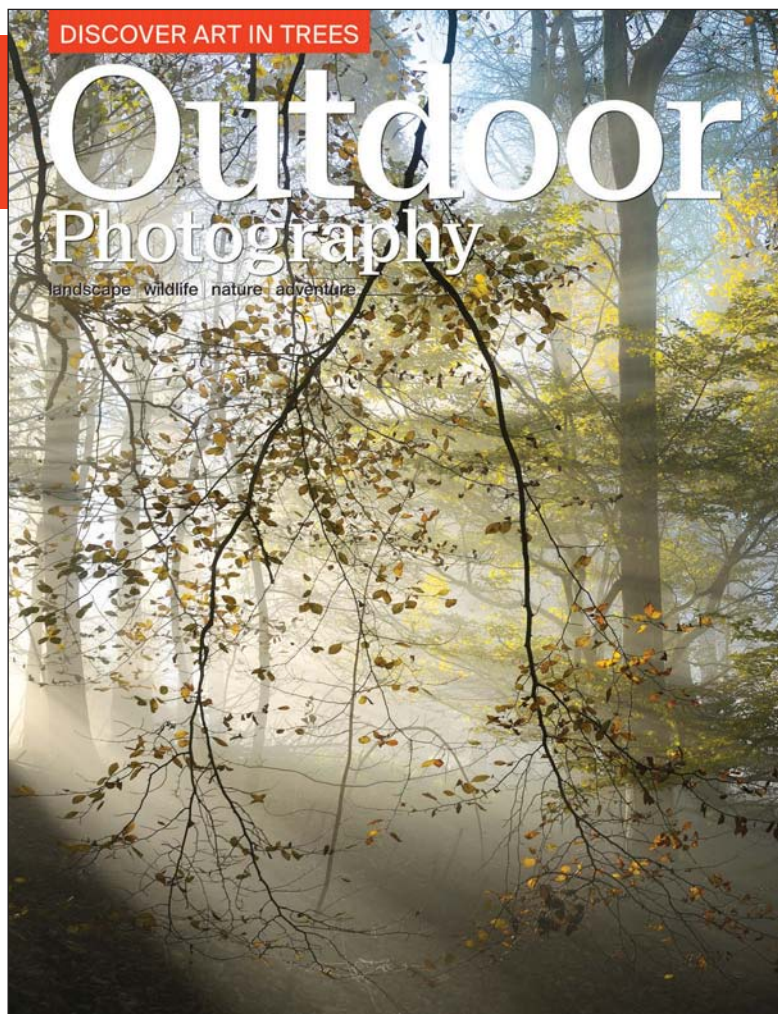
Putting out mealworms can increase the opportunities for some species such as blackbird, but they will be too large for blue tits to collect. Other species will line up their young along a branch and then move along feeding each one, but so far I haven't been lucky enough to photograph this.

above (left) Sometimes young birds perch in the open to be fed, as this great tit has.

above (right) Young birds such as this blue tit will often call for attention and food from the adults.

left This young blackbird is about to be fed a mouthful of mealworms by 'Dad'.

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In the Land of the Blind the one-eyed man...

Licking his wounds after being diagnosed with permanent ultraviolet light damage in his left eye, Nick Smith contemplates whether, for the photographer in the field, this is irresponsible self-infliction or merely the cost of doing business

Logically speaking, if everyone thought that they'd had more than their fair share of bad luck, then all shares would be equal and everything would be fair. But sitting in the oculist's surgery recently I permitted myself what I believe psychologists might call an 'old-fashioned wallow'. It's not fair, I internally wailed, having been brutally diagnosed with permanent corneal epithelial injury from prolonged exposure to ultraviolet rays in snowfields and sandy deserts. Arc eye, photokeratitis, flash burn – call it what you will, the result is that my dominant left eye is now not working as once it did, and it's beyond bad luck: it's just not fair.

Of course, it's not bad luck at all: it's just desserts. I've known for many years the dangers of ultraviolet light. As far back as June 2001, in the build-up to the total solar eclipse, I was producing cautionary articles for the popular science magazine *Focus* about the need for wearing Mylar-coated viewing goggles when observing this most heavenly of celestial conjunctions. I remember writing the words, and I quote: 'remember kids, there are graveyards full of people who did not wear their Mylar-coated viewing goggles when observing total solar eclipses.'

You can't exactly say that any of this is new to me. But even if it were, I can recall the line from a song on the Clash album *Combat Rock* from decades before. In *Red Angel Dragnet*, making a rare vocal appearance, bass player Paul Simonon warned against doing something or other that I can't quite remember 'for the same reason no one ever pointed a telescope at the sun.' I wonder what would have happened if the Clash had been around during the Renaissance. Perhaps the Italian astronomer and inventor of the telescope Galileo might have taken heed while discovering the Jovian moons, kept his sight and thus avoided being remembered, in part at least, for being the 'noblest eye' that darkened.

My first suspicion that all was not well arose last summer when, drinking a glass of the good stuff in a bar at the Royal Albert Hall, I knocked over a champagne glass that had been standing on a table in my lower-left peripheral vision. I had been making an expansive statement about Mahler's Fifth Symphony when the accompanying sweeping gesture caused embarrassing havoc. I spent the next five minutes apologising both to my friend and the barmaid who had assisted me in clearing up. I mumbled that I'd reached a point in my celebrations when all glasses were vulnerable. But the sobering truth was that I simply hadn't seen it.

Back at the eye doctor's a bewildered optician wondered why there should be so much damage in my left eye, while the right presented no symptoms. She then asked me a series of 'lifestyle questions', which featured an inquiry into whether my occupation included welding (it doesn't). As she busied herself shining points of light into my headlamps, marking her observations on a pre-printed form, my mind wandered to those situations where I had effectively pointed a telescope at the sun. I don't spend as much time as I would like in the polar regions, but when I do there is the constant risk of snow blindness. Aware of that, I've often separated myself from exorbitant chunks of cash at airports, kitting myself out with yet another pair of polarised Ray-Bans. I spend much more time in the dusty deserts of the world, and in these I take identical precautions.

But I've always had a weakness for shooting sunsets and silhouettes, and wherever I've taken them I seem to pass hours looking through a long lens straight at Helios's golden face. From time to time I've been aware of temporary loss of vision, but it always seemed to come back in the space of time it took me to get on the outside of a glass of something chilled and yellow. For me, these transitory moments of discomfort never seemed to be anything more significant than that. But now I can see, if you'll pardon the pun, that the cumulative effect of shooting weaver birds in the flattop Acacia with an apricot-coloured sun glowing behind the foliage, is that something uncomfortably permanent and permanently uncomfortable is the price I paid.

The only question I can ask is whether it was worth it. On the one hand, when it comes to getting the shots you want most in this world, the cuts and bruises you inevitably fall foul of on the road are simply the cost of doing business. On the other hand, given that I was fully aware of the dangers of exposure to ultraviolet light, there's a nagging doubt in my mind that I may have been complacent or even foolish. There isn't one decent photograph that I would yield in exchange for the restoration of my complete eyesight, and yet the naivety involved with taking such unnecessary risks is something that offends my pride in being an intelligent human. I can't really say with my hand on my heart that this isn't fair. But there are times, especially when my eye gives me grief – which happens with increasing frequency – when I am filled with regret for my self-inflicted injury. But show me a man without regrets and I'll show you a man without a soul.

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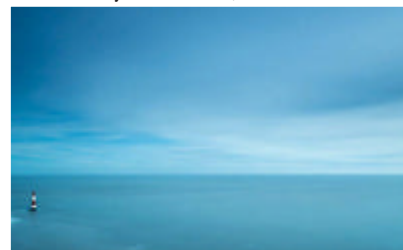
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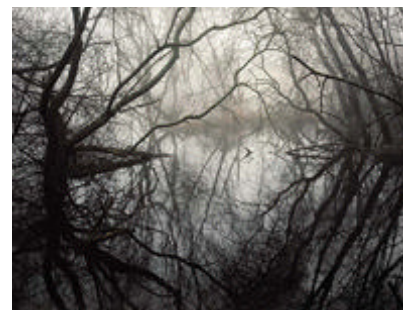
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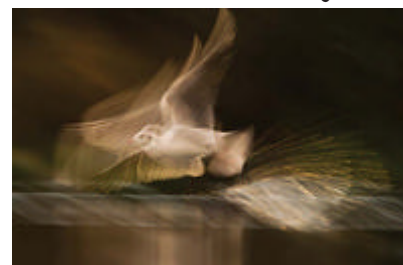
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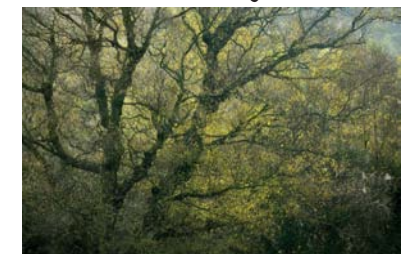
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Take on our photo challenge – send us your best tree and woodland photos (see page 111), and as well as having your image featured in the September 2015 issue of *OP*, you could also win a superb Manfrotto Befree tripod, worth £174.95.



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Write to us! Please send your views, opinions and musings to claire.blow@thegmcgroup.com, or send your comments to us by post. If your letter is published as our 'Letter of the Month' you'll win a prize; this month we gave away a MindShift Gear UltraLight Camera Cover.

Please note that letters may be edited.



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WHERE IN THE WORLD?

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RETURN OF YOUR WORK

Please include a SAE if you would like your submission returned.

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Due to the many submissions we receive from our readers each month, no correspondence can be entered into. If you have not heard from us within 10 weeks (except for Viewpoints) then it is unlikely we will be using your work in the magazine on this occasion.

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GEAR ZONE

ACQUIRE

88 **Gearing up**

90 **Camera test**



SAMSUNG NX1 – READY FOR ACTION?

Andy Luck takes Samsung's new speedy mirrorless camera for a spin

Nikon D7200 ▼

With a 24.2MP CMOS sensor, native ISO up to 25600, EXPEED 4 image processor and a continuous shooting rate of 6fps, Nikon's new D7200 is a strong contender in the APS-C format camera market. One of its most impressive features is its improved autofocus system, which has 51 AF points, all sensitive down to -3EV.

Guide price £939.99 (body only)
europe-nikon.com



Joby Action grip pole ▶

Compatible with popular action video cameras such as the GoPro and Sony's Action Cam, Joby's Action grip pole allows you to get creative when recording your most epic adventures. Giving an additional two feet of reach during POV shots, Joby's latest product lets you get your whole body in the frame, and it weighs just 200g.

Guide price £22
joby.com



GEARING UP

Keen Zambezi ▼

If you're planning on taking some river or coastal shots this season, Keen's latest sandal is the perfect fit. With multi-directional lugs and textile reinforced rubber outsole, the Zambezi gives extra durability and traction when on slippery surfaces. If you get too close to the water's edge, the sandal's fast-drying microfibre lining and synthetic webbing upper for quick drainage means your feet won't stay wet for long. Featuring Keen's signature toe protection bumper and an EVA footbed with a contoured arch, they're great when pacing up the trail, too.

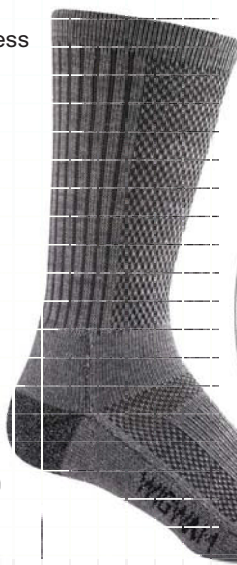
Guide price £79.99
keenfootwear.com



Wigwam Merino Trailblaze Pro ▼

A firm favourite with hikers, runners and adventurers in the US for the last 110 years, Wigwam's socks are also available to buy in the UK. One of the company's core products is the Merino Trailblaze Pro, which combines soft, odour-resistant wool with mesh vents and Wigwam's Ultimax Pro wicking technology. With its cushioned sole, this sock will keep your feet dry and blister-free. It also has seamless toe closure for extra comfort.

Guide price £16
wigwam.com



Elinchrom ELB 400 ▼

Give your adventure images extra impact with Elinchrom's portable and powerful outdoor flash unit. With 350 full-power flashes from one charge, the Elinchrom ELB 400 has three new flash modes – strobe, sequence and delayed – and ensures the shortest flash durations are at high power levels. Increasing your chances of capturing the desired shot, the unit can recycle from full power (424w/s) in just 1.6 seconds. It also has a built-in Skyport system, which provides seamless synchronisation and control between the unit and your camera. Accessories such as the Quadra Action Head and Quadra Ringflash Pro are sold separately.

Guide price £869
elinchrom.com



Lifeventure AXP Thermolite Sleeper ▼

When camping out this summer, Lifeventure's AXP Thermolite Sleeper will keep you cosy during those cooler nights. A great way to increase the warmth of your existing sleeping bag, this handy piece of kit is made from a combination of Thermolite and Modal hollow core fibres that trap warm air and boost a normal sleeping bag's temperature by up to 16°C. Made from an ultra soft fabric with antimicrobial properties, the sleeper can also be used on its own in warmer conditions.

Guide price £34.99
lifeventure.co.uk



Memory Map Android GPS TX4 ▼

Created for hikers and outdoor adventurers, Memory Map's Android GPS TX4 is a smartphone and GPS unit in one. With a faster processor, a bigger display and more memory than its predecessor, the TX4 comes with a full colour touchscreen, 8MP camera, 3G and Bluetooth. This waterproof, rugged and reliable device can be used instead of or alongside your existing smartphone.

Guide price £349
memory-map.co.uk



Manfrotto XPRO Geared Head ▼

Designed with the outdoor macro photographer in mind, Manfrotto's latest tripod head allows users to frame their photos with ultimate precision, thanks to its micrometric knobs and three axes. Weighing only 750g, the XPRO Geared Head can support a load of 4kg and features the common 200PL photographic plate for versatility and convenience.

Guide price £169.95
manfrotto.co.uk



Sony E-mount FE 28mm f/2 wideangle lens ▼

Ideal for handheld shooting in low light, Sony's latest full-frame wideangle prime lens produces images with edge-to-edge sharpness, thanks to its two ED glass elements. It has a nine-blade circular aperture, three aspherical lens elements and an inner focus mechanism driven by an advanced linear actuator for near silent autofocus. Light, compact and designed to resist dust and moisture, Sony's 28mm f/2 wideangle lens is perfect for getting high quality pictures during late evening shoots.

Guide price £419
sony.co.uk



ThinkTank Photo CF/SD + Battery Wallet ▲

To save you having to dig around your kit bag to find those small camera accessories, ThinkTank's latest product lets you keep a spare memory card and DSLR battery in one wallet. Featuring a water-repellant coating and 420D ripstop nylon for extra protection, the wallet also comes with an attachment loop, making it easy to locate and quick to access.

Guide price £8
snapperstuff.com

Samsung NX1

With the highest pixel count of any APS-C format mirrorless camera, high-speed shooting, 4K video and more, the Samsung NX1 promises big things. **Andy Luck** puts it to the test

Guide price £1,299 (body only)

Contact samsung.co.uk



Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) at Warwick Castle. The level of detail from the NX1's 28.2-megapixel APS-C BSI-CMOS sensor is of a standard you would expect from a full frame sensor.

Samsung NX1 with 50-150mm f/2.8 OIS lens, ISO 320, 1/1000sec at f/5.6

The new Samsung NX1 could be the photographic surprise of the year so far – it is certainly the most athletic performer by a long way. This mirrorless, interchangeable lens camera, has quite a track presence, with a spec that, on paper at least, eclipses the best APS-C DSLR cameras and even threatens to topple some mighty full-frame cameras, too.

How does 15fps burst shooting with full autofocus and 4K video for less than £1,300 sound, for example? In the case of the NX1, it literally sounds fantastic. The camera has an addictive, well

damped and sewing machine-like shutter sound, and rattles off frames at an unprecedented rate.

Samsung's smartphone experience has resulted in the NX1's powerful quad-core DRiME processor, which does an amazing job in moving the camera's large files so quickly. The buffer of around 20 shots or so in JPEG and Raw is reached very quickly, however, and requires a fast card to clear quickly. Nevertheless, this is still impressive stuff, outgunning the frame rates of the top sports-orientated DSLRs, including full-frame cameras, by quite some margin.

The NX AF System III in this camera is also perfectly capable of keeping up. Claimed to be the world's fastest, it utilises 209 contrast-detect points and 205 cross-type phase detection points across an impressive spread, encompassing 90% of the frame area.

Then there is the sensor itself, which is a 28.2MP, APS-C BSI (back-illuminated) CMOS sensor. Not only is this the highest pixel count in its class, but the BSI system is a first for an APS-C camera and has several benefits in terms of lower noise and better low light performance.

As a mirrorless camera with a DSLR shape, the natural competitor might seem to be Panasonic's GH4, but the NX1's much higher resolution and extremely high quality magnesium alloy-shelled, weather-sealed body, puts it squarely in the territory of cameras such as the new Canon EOS 7D MkII and Nikon D7200.

At 550g, and despite being operationally much faster, the NX1 manages to be lighter than both those cameras – probably because it does not need a mirror box. The NX1 is even marginally lighter than the Panasonic GH4, but it feels a whole order of magnitude chunkier and heavier than the micro four-thirds GH4 once you add one of Samsung's much bigger APS-C sized lenses. For example, the 16-50mm f/2-2.8 'S' ED OIS standard zoom weighs a meaty 655g, and the 50-150mm 'S' lens I also tried with the camera weighs a seriously shoulder straining 915g. Both of these S-brand lenses are also very expensive, at around £940 and £1,200, respectively, but they bring superior optical performance, high build quality and weather resistance to what is currently a rather limited NX-fit lens lineup.



TECH SPEC

Camera type Mirrorless, interchangeable lens
Sensor 28.2-megapixel APS-C BSI CMOS
Resolution 6480x4320
File formats Raw, JPEG, MP4
Shutter speeds 30-1/8000sec
Autofocus 205-point hybrid system
Maximum burst rate 15fps
ISO sensitivity 100-25600
HD movie mode 4K (4096x3840)
LCD 3in 1,036,000 dots
Viewfinder EVF OLED 100% coverage, diopter adjustment
Flash Built-in GN 11
Storage SD, SDHC, SDXC, UHS-I, UHS-II
Connections Wi-Fi, NFC, Bluetooth, USB 3.0, Micro USB
Size 138.5x102.3x65.8mm
Weight 550g



The remains of the medieval bridge at Warwick. The new kit zoom lens is good even wide open and, when combined with the back-illuminated sensor, gives the NX1 potential for highly detailed landscapes. *Samsung NX1 with 16-50mm f/2-2.8 OIS lens, ISO 100, 1/500sec at f/2.8*

In the hand, the NX1 with lens attached is not only hefty; its fit and fittings also feel of a very high order. There is also a small LCD status screen on the top plate, like that of a DSLR camera, but the positioning of the shutter speed dial set back behind the shutter release feels a little unnatural. On the back there is a 3in tilting Super AMOLED screen that provides a beautifully clear and smooth display with very natural looking colours, and it does not suffer overly from reflection outdoors as so many monitors do.

The electronic viewfinder, with 2,360,000 dots and 100% coverage is, in my opinion, among the best out there, with a very low lag time. I was able to

track some large raptors in flight with the EVF, but I have to say that I still prefer a conventional optical viewfinder, such as those found in the Canon EOS 7D MkII or Nikon D7200, for high-speed tracking.

Battery life is rated at 500 (CIPA), somewhat limited compared to say 1,110 for the Nikon D7200. My experience bore this out, as I was down to the last bar after 276 shots, so I am not convinced this is up to DSLR standards – the optional battery grip for the BP1900 battery would probably be a wise investment if you were planning to make much use of the NX1's high-speed shooting capabilities. This would of course also add further bulk and weight to the camera.



LIKES

- ✓ Strong build
- ✓ Very good image quality
- ✓ Fast autofocus
- ✓ Blistering 15fps shooting
- ✓ Lovely OLED screen and EVF

DISLIKES

- ✗ Current lack of any super-telephoto lenses in the NX range
- ✗ Limited battery life
- ✗ USB battery charging only
- ✗ Wall charger should be supplied

VERDICT

All the speed in the world means little if the image quality isn't something pretty special, too, and with the NX1's 28.2MP back-illuminated sensor comes some of the best image quality I have yet seen from an APS-C camera. Some will still no doubt prefer an optical viewfinder, but the NX1 feels top-notch, and for the money it sets a very high bar for others to try and reach.

RATINGS

Handling	94%
Performance	98%
Specification	95%
Value	97%

OVERALL
96%

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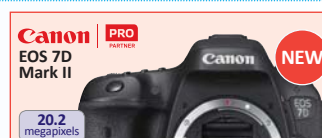
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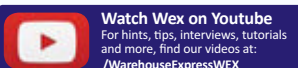


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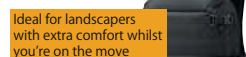
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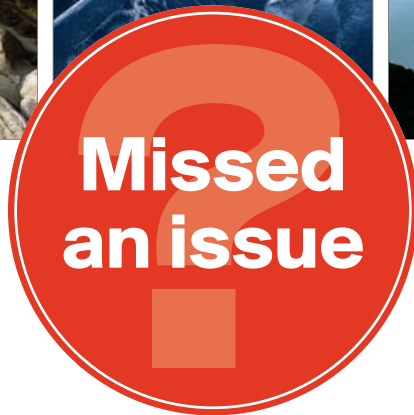
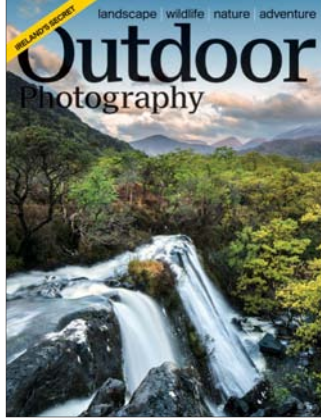
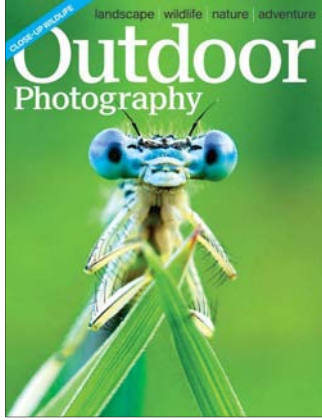
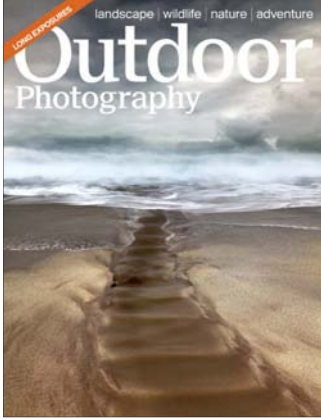
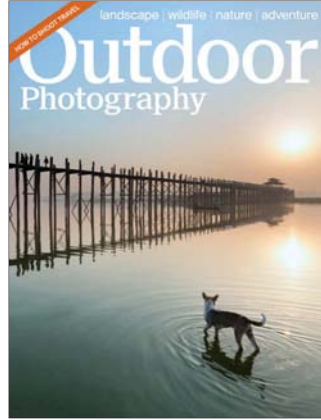
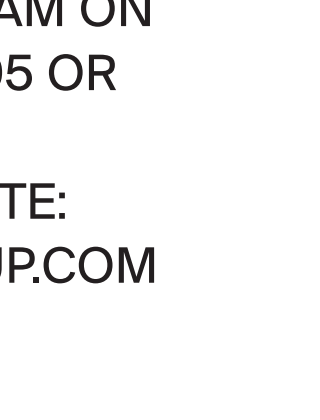
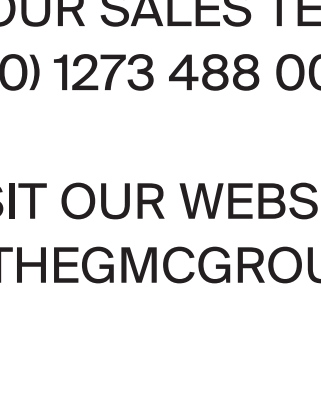
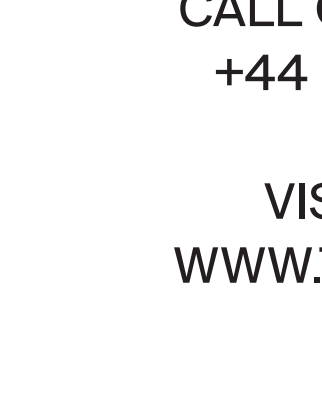
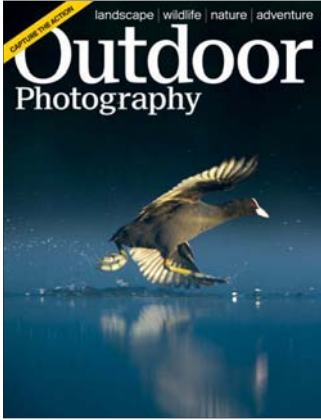
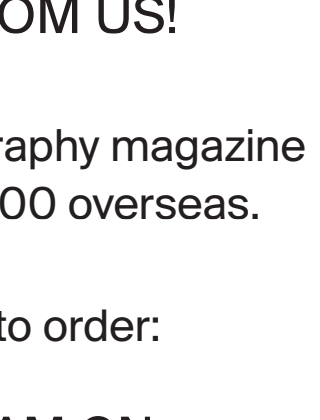
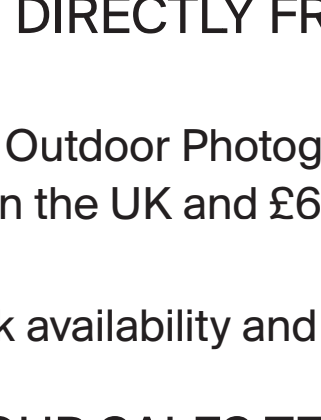
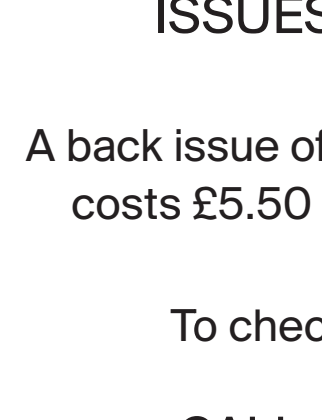
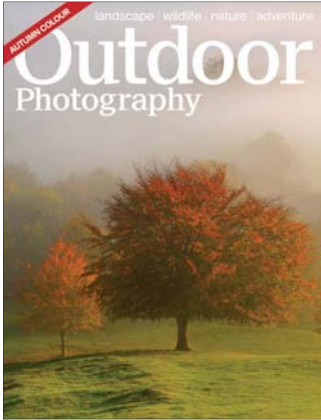
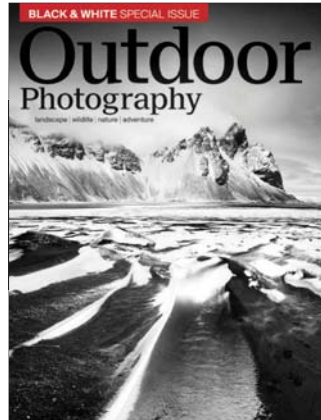
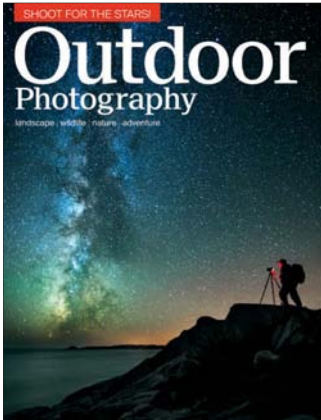
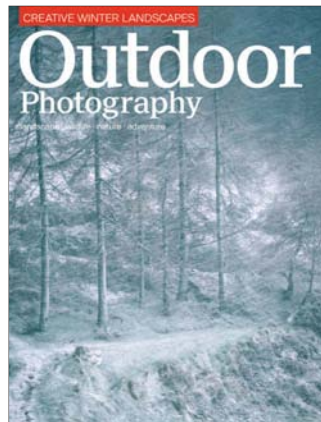
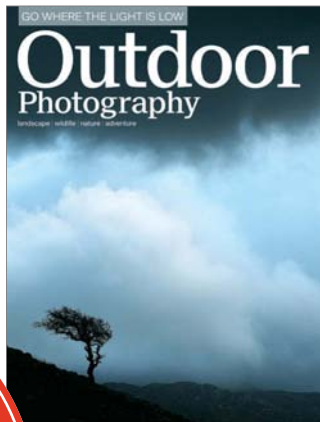
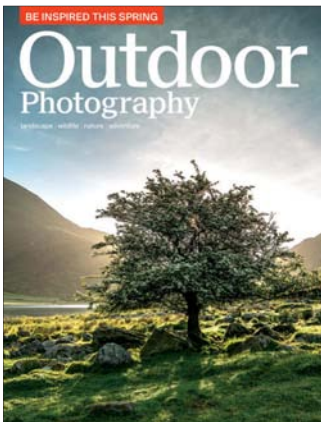
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Gorillas & African Safari Experience, Port Lympne £149

May 31st, July 5th, Aug 9th; 3 gorilla sessions. No wires, fences or bars throughout the day. Clean backgrounds plus Privileged Access. Photograph at eye level over moat. Huge male silverbacks + family group. Private VIP Safari for 2.5 hours. Rhinos, Wildebeest, Eland, Zebras, Giraffes, Buffalo, Ostriches, Deer.

Birds of Prey Workshop, Bedford £99

July 18th, 19th; Private flying displays on pre-determined flightpath helps you to focus on birds in flight. Excellent opportunities with carefully chosen backgrounds. Also static shots in outstanding wooded locations. Jesses carefully hidden. This location boasts one of the largest collections of Birds of Prey in the UK. White tailed Sea Eagle, Bald Eagles, Hawks, Owls, Falcons, Kestrels, Buzzards and Long Eared Owl (new).

Foxes, Otters, Wildcats, Badgers & more, Surrey. £139

July 6th, 7th, 8th; Inside enclosures 'til sunset. Also Owls, Snakes, Badgers, Polecats, Weasels, Hedgehog, Harvest Mice & various Deer. This is possibly England's longest established photographic venue. 2 sessions with the foxes, sometimes only inches away from you. Time is spent inside enclosures with Foxes, Otters & Scottish Wildcats. Badgers GUARANTEED. No fences or wires to shoot through for any subject today.

Small Cats Workshop, Welwyn, Herts. £99

June 1, July 13, Aug 24 Aug 31; Privileged access to Snow Leopards, Amur Leopards, Pumas, Caracal, Leopard Cat, Lynx, Servals, Golden Cat. As featured recently on TV on Animal Planet. Small groups. Tuition

Bass Rock Gannets £185

June 5, 7, 11; Private boat. Exclusive use of island for just 10 photographers. 50,000 pairs of nesting gannets on one small island. 4.5 hours photography. Amazing close-ups & fantastic flight shots. Large crate of fish fed to gannets as they dive into the sea. An amazing sight that you will never forget.

Gannets diving off Bass Rock £99

June 26th; Fantastic new workshop for 2014. We sail round Bass Rock without landing on the island. A whole hour of throwing fish into the sea for the Gannets to catch. Amazing diving shots. 1,000 + dives. Tuition.

Farne Islands Puffins (Over 5 hrs photography) £89

June 6th, 10th, 17th, 20th; 20 species of birds. 50,000 puffins. Guillemots, Razorbills, Shag, Arctic Tern colony etc. You will get unbelievably close to some of the species. Get that much sought after shot of Puffins with their beaks crammed full of sand eels. Tips and Tuition. Approximately 5 hours photography.

Pro Birds of Prey Shoot, Bamburgh, Northumberland. £139

June 13th, 14th; Amazing photography opportunities. Hill top views overlooking large extensive valleys and seascapes. Rocks and gorse bushes abound. Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Snowy Owl, Eagle Owl and Barn Owl will be placed in really natural situations. Jesses will be hidden where possible for those perfect "in the wild" shots. Can combine with Bass/Farne as this location is very close to the Farne Islands.

Pro Birds of Prey Shoot (2), Bamburgh, Northumberland. £139

June 4th, 16th, 23rd; New venue. Both the falconer and the birds are different to workshop above. Venues are about 20 miles apart. We will take two of the birds down to an amazingly beautiful, little known waterfall. This will provide a unique backdrop for your subjects. The falls are surrounded by trees covered with mosses and lichens. We will photograph up to 10 different species, mainly British. Maximum 8 photographers.



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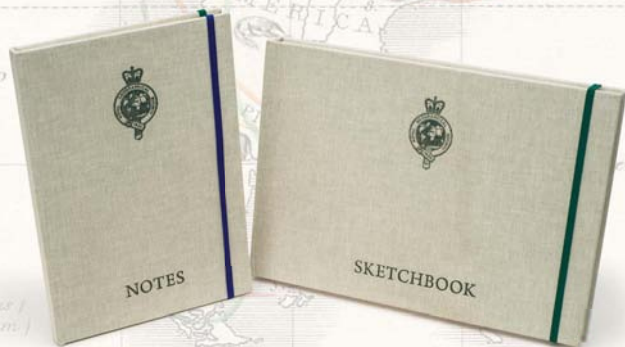
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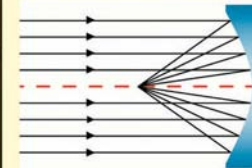
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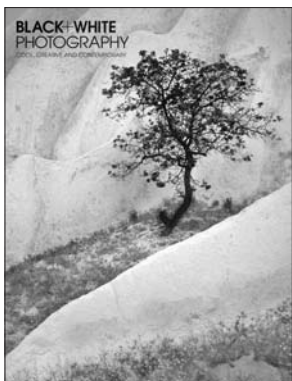
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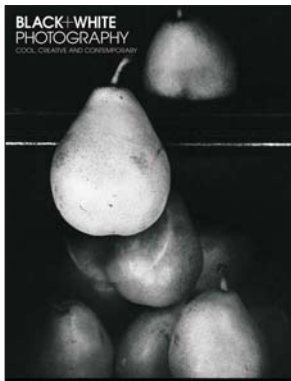
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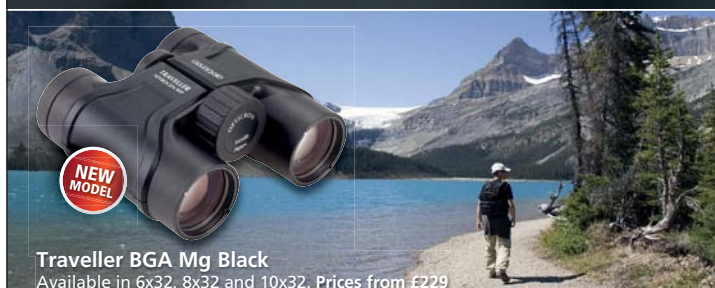
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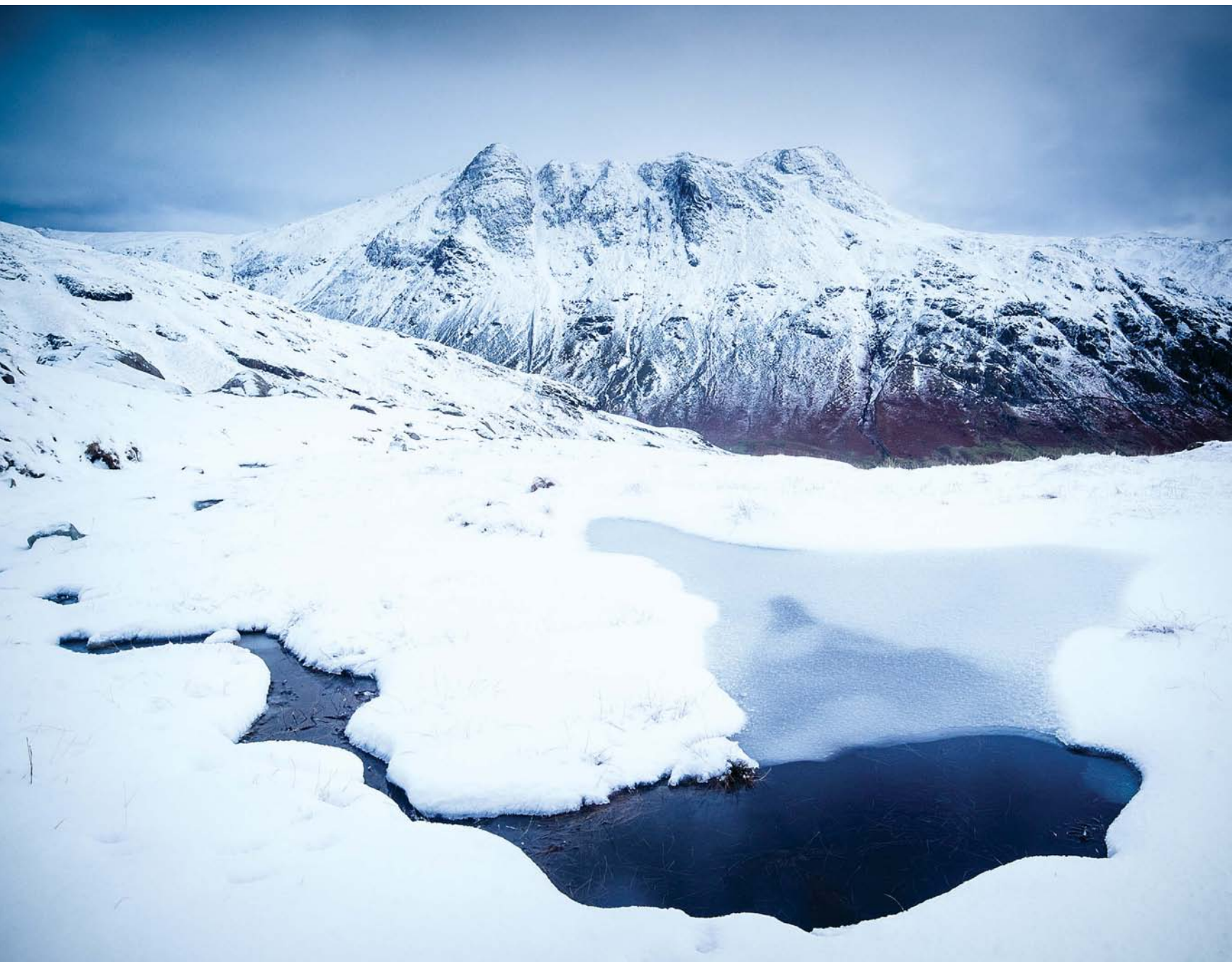
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IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING THIS MONTH...

Low light landscapes

In our February issue we challenged you to show us your best low light landscape photographs, and the results were truly mesmerising. Here's the winner of the SmartWool PHD gloves and socks, and our 11 runners-up





WINNER

1/ Geraint Evans (opposite)

Langdale Pikes from near Red Tarn, below Pike of Blisco in Cumbria. I walked up from Langdale in the dark in the hope of catching sunrise lighting up the Pikes. This small pool proved to be a perfect foreground, and the long exposure helped to show movement in the clouds. This was taken in a gale some minutes before the sun appeared. I then walked on round Crinkle Craggs. *Nikon D3100 with Sigma 10-20mm lens at 20mm, ISO 200, 10sec at f/16, Manfrotto Befree tripod*

[flickr.com/photos/126232476@N06/15805442953/in/photostream](https://www.flickr.com/photos/126232476@N06/15805442953/in/photostream)

2/ Wayne Hutchinson

This photo was taken near Ravenstonedale in Cumbria, under a full moon and with snow on the ground. For a while the sheep stayed in a bunch looking at me, then wandered away, which gave the ghostly impression I was hoping for. *Nikon D3 with 24-70mm f/2.8 Nikkor lens at 34mm, ISO 400, 55sec at f/8, tripod*
farm-images.co.uk

3/ Ian Mountford

This image shows the jet black volcanic sands and basalt columns at Vik, in southern Iceland, caught in a ferocious gale between snow storms. It produced eerie light. Icelandic legend has it that the columns are trolls who were caught by the sunrise and turned to stone. *Sony A7R, Metabones Adapter with Canon 24-105mm f/4 IS lens at 45mm, ISO 100, 20sec at f/4, Lee 10-stop ND, Lee 0.9 ND grad, Manfrotto MT293A tripod and Giottos ball head*
ianmountfordphotography.com

4/ Graham Hobbs

This was taken across Holes Bay in Poole Harbour, Dorset. The full moon rose around sunset so, when there was a promising foreground, I used my longest lens to make the moon large in the frame. The flurry of blurry seagulls was a bonus.

Pentax K10D with smc Pentax-FA 400mm f/5.6 ED IF lens, ISO 100, 1/4sec at f/14, tripod*
grahamhobbs.co.uk

5/ Katherine Knight

This picture was taken while I was camping on Mount Shasta, a volcano in northern California. It was cold and the inviting orange glow from the tent made me want to be inside it. I continued taking shots until after dark, but I liked this one best where the last of the light showed the trees.

Canon EOS Rebel with EF-S 18-135mm lens at 18mm, ISO 400, 2.5sec at f/6.3, Dolica tripod
katherineknightphotography.com

6/ Simon Swales

Loch Katrine from the summit of Ben A'an, in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. A few days after the winter solstice, I climbed Ben A'an for the sunset. It yielded little in the way of drama so I waited for the sky to darken sufficiently to create a moody image in the gloaming light. The rock in the immediate foreground is not big but I chose a low viewpoint to accentuate its size and shape and to create



4



5



6

a sense of depth in the photograph.
Canon EOS 5D MkII with Zeiss Distagon 21mm lens, ISO 100, 4sec at f/11, Lee 0.6 ND grad, tripod, cable release
simonswalesphotography.co.uk

7/ Gerard McSweeney

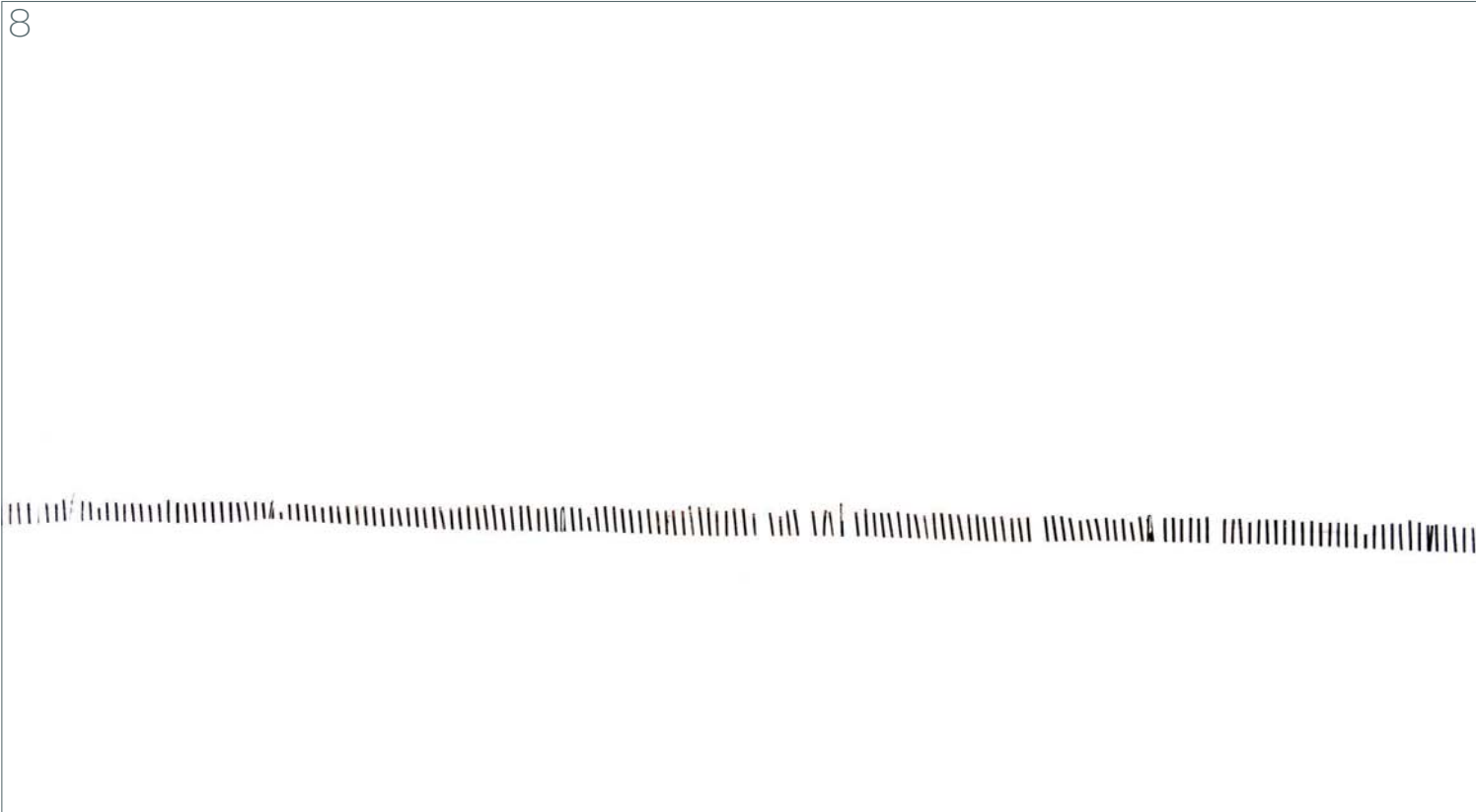
The lighthouse on Galley Head near Clonakilty, County Cork. I began exposing images of this scene after the sun had set, and continued as

it got darker. This exposure was made while there was still some ambient light and a light sea fog is being picked up by the lighthouse beam.
Canon EOS 5D with 24-105mm f/4 L IS lens at 35mm, ISO 160, 25sec at f/8, tripod

8/ Jeremy Rossman

While I was walking alongside Lake Michigan in the USA the wind picked up and created near-whiteout blizzard conditions. The only thing that

remained visible was a stark black line of fence posts, half buried in the snow. By setting the exposure for the fence posts the white of the snow and the sky seamlessly blurred together, creating a feeling of solitude and calm in the final image.
Canon EOS 5D with Canon EF 28-105mm f/3.5-4.5 II USM lens at 50mm, ISO 400, 1/1000sec at f/5, tripod
haecceityphotography.com





9/ Julian Baird (opposite top)

It was a risky decision to set the alarm for 3.45am and set off on a two-hour drive to St Michael's Mount in Cornwall. The weather forecast was uncertain but I thought fortune favours the bold. Just as the tide receded the sun started to rise and bathed the sky in morning light.

Nikon D750 with Nikkor 16-35mm f/4 lens at 19mm, ISO 100, 30sec at f/13, cable release, tripod
julianbaird.com

10/ Janet Miles (opposite bottom)

I visited southern Utah in the summer, a time of hot mornings and afternoon storms. I had never photographed a storm before, so we stopped our camper van on a hilltop and watched the scene unfold all around us.

Nikon D800 with Nikkor 24-70mm f/2.8 lens at 52mm, ISO 50, 2.5sec at f/22, 3-stop ND, tripod
[flickr.com/photos/softleyj/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/softleyj/)

11/ Tony Matthews

This image, taken just before sunrise, shows a lone oak tree near Ladle Hill in north Hampshire. I have been trying to take this photograph for nearly five years. In that time, there have only been four mornings on which the tree was leafless, the moon was in the right position and the weather was suitable.

Canon EOS 1D MkIV with EF 300mm f/4 L IS USM lens, ISO 400, 1/30sec at f/11, Manfrotto 055cx PRO4 tripod, cable release
[flickr.com/photos/ammatthews](https://www.flickr.com/photos/ammatthews)

12/ Steve McDonald

The image is of Paradise Island lighthouse in the Bahamas, taken from Nassau. I particularly like the dawn light reflecting on the clouds.

Canon EOS 5D MkII with Canon 24-105mm USM L lens at 30mm, ISO 100, 5sec at f/13, polariser, Manfrotto tripod
african-mystique.co.uk



YOUR NEXT CHALLENGE

Trees and woods

While trees and woods are almost always enchanting to be around, they are notoriously difficult to take strong and compelling images of. Seeking visual order from the chaos of trunks, branches and leaves requires plenty of patience, experience and a keen eye for pattern. We want to see your very best images of trees and woodland that demonstrate there is some art to be found in such complex scenes. Read Russ Barnes' super article on the subject on page 26, and then send us your images; we can't wait to see them!

Enter and you could win a superb Manfrotto 190 go! tripod worth £159.95!

The winner of the trees and woodland challenge will not only have their winning image published, along with the runners-up, in the Autumn 2015 issue of *OP*, but will also receive a Manfrotto 190 go! tripod.

Completing the hobbyist and the professional offering of the 190 range, the 190 go! is even more compact and lightweight, but still fast to set up and stable to capture sharp images. It is the lightest aluminium model in the 190 range, weighing just 1.7kg, and it folds down to 45cm in length. The new twist locking system allows the easy opening and closure of all sections at once with a single hand. The 90-degree column mechanism is hidden inside the top casting until it is needed. The centre column can swing from horizontal to vertical quickly and easily. Combined with the four leg angles, the 190 go! allows you to achieve low perspectives. To find out more go to manfrotto.co.uk.

Closing date for entries is 4 July 2015

See page 84 for an entry form and our terms and conditions.





Where in the world?

If you can name the unusual geological formations shown in the photograph, you could win a pair of superb Aku Transalpina GTX hiking boots, worth £175!

Where is it?

The image shows one of the planet's most incredible geological wonders, comprising over 1,000 individual grass-covered mounds. But is it:

- a) **Bungle Bungle Range, Australia**
- b) **Tsingy de Bemaraha, Madagascar**
- c) **The Chocolate Hills, Philippines**

The correct answer and the winner's name will be published in OP195 (on sale 30 July). Send your answer to opcomp@thegmcgroup.com, stating 'Rock formations' as the subject, or drop it in the post to: Where in the world – 'Rock formations', OP, 86 High Street, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1XN.

Deadline for entry is midnight on 22 June 2015.

THIS MONTH'S SUPERB PRIZE

A pair of Aku Transalpina GTX hiking boots

This month's winner will receive a pair of Aku Transalpina GTX hiking boots, worth £175. Combining traditional manufacturing skills with the latest technology, these boots are ideal for long hikes on uneven trails. Features include a suede Air 8000 upper for breathability, innovative IMS triple density outsole, exoskeleton system for extra cushioning on the arch of the foot and Gore-Tex lining throughout – and they weigh just 600g. The boots are available in six colours and come in both men's and women's sizes.

WORTH
£175



To find out
more go to
aku.it/en

MARCH ISSUE WINNER

In OP189 we asked you to name the ancient fortress featured in the photograph. The correct answer is:

a) Hohenzollern Castle, Germany



The winner of the Aclima baselayer and Nikwax products is Penny Braithwaite from Hilton, Derbyshire. Congratulations!

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